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CHILD TOILERS

E. E. BROWN

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from Mamma

Oct 23rd 1883

CHILD TOILERS

OF

BOSTON STREETS.

BY

EMMA E. BROWN.

AUTHOR OF "FROM NIGHT TO LIGHT."

BOSTON:

D. LOTHROP AND COMPANY,

FRANKLIN ST., CORNER OF HAWLEY.

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CHILD TOILERS.

CHRISTMAS GREENS.

IT is a well-known fact that in all of our large cities a great number of children are employed in various street occupations; but I think few realize how much actually depends upon the labors of these little "Child Toilers." In the papers here given, all the facts stated, and all the illustrations, are drawn, not from imagination, but from real life.

And, as appropriate to the season, we give first in the series a sketch of our little street venders in

"CHRISTMAS GREENS."

Since early morning, like some wee dryad of the forest, little Anna has stood there in her bower

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of green. It is a bitter cold day, and a north corner, down in Quincy Market, is certainly not a favorable place for tempering our bleak Boston east winds to the "shorn lamb;" but Anna is a brave little girl, and drawing the old water-proof over her head she manages by vigorous clappings and stampings to keep head, hands, and feet in a tolerable state of comfort. Then she is so interested in the arrangement and sale of her pretty Christmas greens that she doesn't stop to think much about herself or the weather.

All around her little stand, by the great stone pillars, are many "rivals in trade;" for since the week began, hundreds of teams have come in from the country with all manner of "green things." Close beside her, stand some fragrant spruces and firs that came from away "down east," for although many of the suburban towns, especially Randolph, Needham, Stoughton, West Wareham, Walpole, Lincoln, North Abington and Natick, furnish our city with much of the so-called "small" trimmings, it is chiefly from the grand old forests of Maine, that our finest Christmas trees, and the "large" trimmings for church and hall are obtained. I am told that one season three thousand trees were shipped from Bangor and Portland to a single firm on Broad street, and many "Down East" farmers come, year after year, to Quincy

LITTLE ANNA.

Market with trees they have felled on their own woodlands.

If any of these trees become injured by transportation, they are generally stripped, and the twigs woven into festoons; while those that still preserve their native symmetry, are sold, according to size and quality, from twenty-five cents to two and three dollars apiece. As no rent is demanded for the use of "outdoor" corners, these countrymen can sometimes clear hundreds of dollars during the holiday season — especially, if in addition to their trees, they bring, as many do, a large assortment of wreaths, crosses, anchors, and other church emblems made by tasteful hands at home.

Of course they are liable to have these smaller wares stolen, as they have no place to store them over night; but "forewarned" they generally come "forearmed," and a common custom among them is to have a large box closely fitted to their vehicles where all the choice greens can be securely kept under lock and key.

Here are two lads, evidently brothers, who have come from a long distance. They have brought only trees, and rough boughs; so, to save the expense of stabling their poor old horse the greens are all taken out of the hurdles and deposited in a heterogeneous

mass upon the side-walk. Then, while one brother stays to arrange and look after their "stock in trade," the other goes home with the empty sledge.

It is a little curious that among all these venders of Christmas greens, you will seldom find an Italian boy or girl; although, in other street occupations, these dark-eyed children of the south out-number — even in Boston — the German, Irish and American born.

Besides those who sell Christmas greens on the corners and in the markets, there are other children — mostly Germans — in our different mission-schools, especially in the one connected with Dr. Ellis's church on Berkeley street, who gather evergreens and berries, before the snow comes, in the fields and woods just about Boston. These the mothers and older sisters at home make up into wreaths, crosses, and other emblems; and a few days before Christmas the children go out upon the street and sell them from door to door.

The florists seldom, if ever, employ boys and girls to sell their holiday decorations; and whenever or wherever you see these little out door merchants, you may be pretty sure they are selling on their own responsibility.

But we are wandering away from little Anna, and

it is her "store" that I want you to notice, particularly. Perhaps you have already recognized her, for the picture we give you is taken from life, and all last summer she stood at this very same corner, selling mints and herbs. Her dark hair and eyes certainly remind one of the little Italians down in Ferry and North Bennett street; but Anna is of German parentage, and since the father's death, her mother has been obliged to go out to service, while a kind old aunt who lives in one of those dark tenement houses on Hanover Avenue, has shared her hard earned home with little Anna.

Weeks ago, before the drifting snows came, the men and boys of the family gathered these bright evergreens — feathery "princess pine," and the "running Jennie" that clambers everywhere with her "seven-leagued boots," sprays of the Roxbury waxwork, too, snow-white immortelles, and the dazzling red berries of the bitter-sweet they found down in the Waltham Meadows; and could you have looked into Anna's home those long November evenings, you would have seen the whole family busily at work upon the fragrant greens — sometimes, "till the wee small hours" of night. For it takes a deal of time and patience to make these pretty emblems as any of my little readers know, who have tried the work

themselves, for home and school decoration; and the modest price that Anna asks for her wreaths and crosses, is but a just compensation for the labor bestowed upon them If she is successful in her holiday sales, she will go to school through the remaining winter months; and then when the "dandelions" come, you will see her again at the corner. And let us not forget that little Anna is but "one of many."

On the opposite corner of the "Agricultural Warehouse" you will find another little vender of Christmas greens whose story is no less interesting. Liz is a little German girl, too; but unlike Anna, she has been brought up a Roman Catholic. Her father and mother are both living, but the family are poor; and all through the year, little Liz, the youngest and the only child now at home, helps bravely, by her street vending to keep the dreaded "wolf from the door." At one time she attended an evening school; but looking down with reddening cheeks upon her shabby dress and tattered shawl, she said in answer to my question:

"No, ma'am — I don't go now — they all made so much fun of me!"

Poor little Liz!

Will no one share with her, and the large class she represents, a drop from their "over-flowing cups?"

These hard times have affected the sale of Christmas greens, more than one might imagine; but, as a rule, the demand for them increases every year. And truly what better cheer can we give our homes, than a breath of all these green things that with mute but eloquent lips are always praising the Lord? Some say that the custom of decorating our houses and our churches with these fragrant boughs, is borrowed from the old Druids, who sought thus to shelter their wood nymphs from the biting frosts; however that may be, it is among Christian nations only, that we find the true signification of Christmas greens; for are they not all emblems of the true life of life that still abides in the heart though all without is cold and dead? Years ago, in the old Puritan families of New England, any festivities at Christmas time would have been as severely denounced as that first banjo in church! But as the years went by, there came, from over the seas, Norse and Swedes and happy German families who brought with them all manner of quaint, beautiful customs that the little American children looked upon with wonder and delight. From their English cousins they had heard about the great yule-log that burned from Christmas eve to Candlemas; the mistletoe bough under which so many kisses were

stolen; the Glastonbury hawthorn that always blossomed on Christmas morning; the games on Twelfth-night; and the sweet carols that the little chimney-sweeps sang in the streets.

But the legends about the Christ-child, and the beautiful trees with their waxen tapers and their wonderful fruit of toys and bon-bons — this was something altogether new to Boston children, a hundred years ago. Now, aside from the large quantities sold in Quincy Market, on Boylston street corner, and other well-known localities in the business part of our city, every florist sells, upon an average, four or five hundred trees at Christmas time, together with an indefinite number of wreaths, crosses and other emblems. In addition to the evergreens already mentioned, the holly (originally *holy* tree), the kalmia, or laurel, the inkberry, a great variety of mosses, ferns, grasses and immortelles are always in demand for Christmas decorations; and since we have only a poor substitute in this country for mistletoe, all our large florist establishments send directly to England for this magical parasite, that is said to possess especial power when found growing upon *oak* boughs Of the many varieties of *roseum* or "everlasting" flowers, I am told, that large quantities are grown

upon the waste lands at Cape Cod; then they are taken to wholesale establishments in Paris and London, made into all sorts of designs, and frequently adorned with artificial colors, before they again cross the water to be sold in our city as choice importations.

The natural colors of these "immortelle" flowers, are white (which needs, however, a thorough bleaching before use), a brilliant yellow, and, among the "amaranth" family, various shades of crimson. Sometimes, especially when the wreaths, crosses etc., are intended for memorial purposes as well as for Christmas decorations, the natural tints are preferred; for *white* is always in demand, and *yellow* in France, is considered a badge of mourning and used at funerals as we would use white or black. There is, among the "roseums," a shaded orange that is not natural, but you can readily tell whether the color is artificial or not by noticing the separate flowers which always lose somewhat of their perfect "rose" form, when subjected to the dyeing process. Aside from this, it is really a very easy matter to tint the stiff petals of "everlasting" flowers; and although, as we said before, most of these decorations are sold as imported articles, the work can be done (and probably is done, in many instances), at our own dye-houses. Indeed, quite a field is opened here, for

home ingenuity; for by the use of a camel's hair brush and good, durable colors, skillful fingers can produce far prettier effects, than any we find among the so called imported designs.

It is a good thing for both the florists and the street venders when Christmas comes upon a Saturday, for then the whole preceeding week can be devoted to the display and sale of Christmas greens. Should a Sunday come between, the "out door" corners must "shut up shop" and put their wares out of the way; but sometimes quick sales bring the largest profit; and the night before Christmas always presents one of the liveliest sights imaginable down in Quincy Market. Then every scrap of green is eagerly gathered up and sold by handfuls; for there is always the "late" customer for Christmas greens as for everything else; and many an enterprising little urchin, by careful "gathering up of the fragments," succeeds in turning at the eleventh hour, literally — a goodly number of pennies for Christmas morning.

THE NEWSBOYS.

DID you ever stop to think what a curious sort of life our little newsboys lead? Taking a car one afternoon, just below the *Herald* office on Washington Street, I was greatly entertained by a bevy of these little fellows, who came trooping in and soon filled up all the vacant seats about me.

Their arms were full of the latest edition, fresh from the press; and with a nimbleness of finger that could only have come from long practice, they quickly folded the damp sheets, slung them across their shoulders, and then, with hands jingling the change in their pockets, they began to talk over the day's losses and gains, and the splendid sales in store for them be-

cause of the "big sensation," all with a shrewdness and keen business insight worthy of State Street or the Exchange.

It was amusing and painful both — this precocious child-talk. The largest boy among them was scarcely older than little Tom, who comes every morning to his papa for spending-money, and who reckons its value simply by the amount of toys or candies it will buy.

What would our little boy think, I wonder, if his breakfast, his dinner, and his supper — to say nothing of lodging and clothes, — depended upon the pennies he could *earn* each day?

Yet among the three hundred newsboys who throng our Boston streets, I find there is scarcely one upon whose exertions does not depend his own support, and, in many instances, the maintenance of *a whole family!*

It was only to-day that an instance came to my notice deserving especial mention. Down by Snow-hill Street is a poor Italian family, consisting of father, mother, and (if I remember rightly) five children.

Two of the boys are licensed to sell newspapers, but at one time last winter the elder brother was taken ill, and the father was sick in bed for months. During all this time the whole burden came upon lit-

tle Antonio, who is only twelve years old, and so very slight you would think him much younger.

But the brave lad at once "took in the situation," and by rising early and working late, he managed to earn enough each day from the sale of his papers to support them all till father and mother were able to work again.

Then there is little Joseph Dondaro, whose shrill voice you may have heard on the corner last evening, as he shouted his "*Herald! Five o'clock!*" He is a tiny boy, with jet-black eyes, hair to match, and a nut-brown complexion that is not wholly due to dust and tan. For Joe is of Jewish parentage, and a hard life the little fellow has had ever since he can remember. His mother died about a year ago, and the wretched drunkard he calls "father" is so cruel to Joe and his little sister, that the children were only too glad when, some months since, he took his hand-organ and, leaving the little ones to look after themselves, wandered off into the country — nobody knew whither.

Since then Joe, with all the dignity of ten years, has taken upon himself the entire responsibility, and tried to fill the place of father and mother both to his little sister, who is only six years old.

Upon an average he can earn by the sale of his

papers three dollars a week; out of this sum he pays for the rent of their one room on Endicott Street, seventy-five cents per week, while the remainder — just think how small! — must feed and clothe them.

Down on North Margin Street is a neat brick building known as the "School for Newsboys and Bootblacks," and here it was that I first saw little Joseph. For, by the conditions of his license, every minor, in our well-regulated city, is expected to attend school at least two hours each day during the school year.

Many of our public schools admit such pupils, and I think the Eliot school alone contains some forty newsboys; but as "two-hour" pupils need separate classes, they cause, of course, a deal of irregularity in graded schools; and so, some ten years back, two special schools — one on North Margin Street, under the charge of Miss Brackett, the other in East-street Place, under Miss Taylor, were opened to give our newsboys, boot-blacks, and little street-peddlers the benefit of thorough instruction at such hours of the day as would least interfere with their "trade."

Before the city fathers, however, had thought of this excellent arrangement, certain kind ladies had established, in the old church on Chauncy Street, a free day school for these little street venders; and

THE NEWSBOY.

had it not been for the benevolence, zeal, and successful labors of those early workers, I doubt if the present fine schools would ever have had an existence.

The school in East-street Place, which is composed almost exclusively of newsboys, numbers between twenty and thirty pupils, and is open from nine to eleven in the morning, and from twelve till two in the afternoon. Nearly all the boys here are of Irish parentage, while in the school on North Margin Street, which is somewhat larger, by far the greater proportion are Italians.

It is an interesting sight to watch these little street Arabs poring over their well-thumbed books; and as I studied their bright, intelligent faces, I couldn't help thinking what a safeguard through the day these precious two hours may be to them!

For besides learning to "read, write and cipher," the kind, judicious, Christian training they are constantly receiving in these excellent schools is really of more value to them than any amount of mere book knowledge.

Here is a little fellow who was pronounced incorrigible when first brought in from the streets; but patient instruction, and the kind, firm control of his teacher, have already wrought such a change in him that Johnny is now considered one of the brightest,

best-behaved boys in the whole school. He and his little brother Michael are both licensed newsboys, and upon them depends the main support of the family, for their father, too, is a miserable drunkard.

Questioning one after another, your heart aches for these little "child toilers," who must needs learn so early in life all the "rough and tumble" of this strange, work-a-day world. Nevertheless, there is a bright side to the picture, for, thrown upon their own resources, and stimulated by the thought of weaker ones who depend upon them, these little fellows early develop a sturdy self-reliance, and a brave fortitude that in after-life is of inestimable benefit to them.

Here, for instance, is little Robert Kelly, only twelve years of age, who helps support a family of eight persons. His father gets occasional jobs when he can, at the coal wharves; but, after all, it is upon little Robert that the steady maintenance depends. At home, he is his mother's "right hand man" in doing all sorts of chores; and at school his neat, tidy appearance, and good conduct, are especially praiseworthy.

Another boy, John Falvey, by name, is fourteen years of age, and the oldest of four children. His father is scarcely ever in a condition to earn anything, and the mother, with her home cares, can do but

little. So the support of the family comes upon John and his youngest brother, who have bravely taken up the burden together. These few instances might be multiplied by a score of others; but I think enough have already been given, to show my readers how much depends upon the labors of this class of little men.

To be sure, their behavior upon the street, is not always what it should be. Sometimes, I am sorry to say, they are rude, noisy, and otherwise disagreeable to passers-by. There is one sad picture that haunts me as I write, and I wouldn't show it to my "*Wide Awake*" readers, only that I want them to know all about the temptations and dangers that beset our little newsboys. One night, not long ago, a tiny lad, not more than nine years old, was found — must I write the ugly words? — *just beastly drunk*, under the steps in Williams Court! Perhaps it was his first taste of the vile liquor — at all events, let us hope it will be the *last* — but the lager beer wagons offer great temptations to the hungry, thirsty boys, and I fear that many of them are frequent customers. Bad conduct on the street, however, is the exception, not the rule, among our Boston newsboys. The bright badge they wear upon their jackets, with their number and "Licensed" upon it, is in itself a guarantee

of good behavior; for before obtaining this from the city government, the boys are on probation a certain length of time. If they prove worthy, and promise faithfully to comply with the terms and conditions of a "Minor's License;" application is made for them, by some responsible person, to the Board of Aldermen; and in due course of time they receive their license papers. Each boy has his own number, and by the payment of one dollar, the silver badges are given them, which they promise to wear conspicuously in sight, and, on no condition, transfer, exchange, borrow or lend. If at any time they wish to give up their licenses, these badges are returned, and their money is paid back to them.

Happening in, one day, at the office on Pemberton Square, I watched with not a little interest, a group of "candidates" as the boys are called before they have received their badges. The little fellows eagerly crowded round the officer's desk, each with his own story to tell, and one after another they received their license papers and bright silver badges. One boy, who stood apart from the rest, had come to give up his license and badge; but as the latter was somewhat marred by careless usage, I noticed he received but seventy-five cents for it. Another little urchin who could hardly reach up to the desk on tip-toe, laid

down the two half dollars he had brought, and received not only his badge but a silver quarter beside. This greatly surprised and delighted him; but Mr. Wright, who has charge of these matters and is always a kind friend to the boys, explained that the badge he had given him, though "second-hand," would answer every purpose, and the extra quarter was greatly needed at home. Opening the big books where all the boy's licenses — or rather copies of them — are filed, one gets an insight into the workings of this admirable system. "A gentleman came to me the other day," said one of the officers in charge, and told me how a certain newsboy had cheated him. "I had no pennies," the gentleman went on to say, "but taking one of the boy's papers, I handed him a twenty-five cent piece which he ran around the corner to change. Of course, that was the last of the boy and the twenty-five — now, sir, don't misunderstand me — I don't care for the missing change, but I do care for the morals of your newsboys!"

"Begging the gentleman to wait a few moments, I looked over my books," said the officer, "found the boy's number which the gentleman had noticed upon his badge, and in the course of fifteen minutes the lad stood before us. He hung down his head when we began to question him, and I feared, at first, that

the boy was guilty; but the alacrity with which he handed the gentleman his change, and his repeated declarations that he 'came back to his stand just as quick as he could, but the gentleman had gone,' quite satisfied the latter, and we both concluded it was better to let the little fellow go. But you can see by this instance what kind of reins we hold over the boys, and how quickly any misdemeanor on their part renders them liable to forfeiture of 'license.'"

In selling papers, the old proverb holds true — it is the "early bird that gets the worm," and a deal of competition is shown among these enterprising little venders.

The several editions are hardly out of press, before our newsboys are "on the spot;" and *Herald*, *Journal*, *Globe*, *Advertiser*, *Traveller*, *Times*, *Transcript*, and *Post* are sounded through the streets by three hundred pairs of lungs, long before the ink is dry.

But if you want to see a genuine "rush," look into Williams Court some afternoon between the hours of three and four. For the "five o'clock edition," as it is called, though really ready for distribution an hour or two earlier, is the most important issue of the day; and the "hand to hand" scramble then, for the first sheets as they come from the printers, is an exciting scene, well worth witnessing.

In the peculiar, weird light of the narrow Court, the little urchins rushing, tumbling, screaming, hurrying hither and thither, and reaching pell-mell one over, the other, look more like little elves than actual children; but while you are wondering where they have all come from, so suddenly, and why it is they do not get into some inextricable tangle, there comes an unexpected lull — in another instant the court is deserted, and up and down Washington street, on Tremont Row, at the depots, the ferries, the different street corners, the entrance to theatre, concert and lecture rooms, on the horse-cars, the Common, the gardens, the various public squares, the evening trains — no matter where you turn, the newsboy's shrill cry pierces your brain.

During "elections," the little fellows are frequently up all night; and any "special" news matter, — as a great fire, a murder, or a disaster at sea, — is always looked upon as a windfall, because of the "extra" sales it will bring. The Sunday papers all give them a larger percentage of profit, than the dailies; but through the week more *Heralds* are sold upon the street than any other of our city journals.

It would be interesting if we could trace out the histories of our little newsboys, as, one after another, they outgrow their street occupations, and seek more manly employments.

Sometimes, they learn a trade, enter shops, or set up business for themselves; and to one lad who has proved himself especially worthy, I am told a fine position has been given, in one of our leading newspaper establishments. The life of a newsboy, as you see, is certainly one that is full of temptation, full of hardship; but always proves a good training school, if right influences can only be thrown about the

TWO MEMBERS OF THE "SHOVEL BRIGADE."

THE SHOVEL BRIGADE.

"MY eyes, Mike! here's a job sure's fun! Wake up, old fellow, I say!"

"Heigho! What's up, Jack?" yawns sleepy Mike from the farthest corner of the old mat that has served them both for a bed.

"Big snowstorm — reg'lar nor'easter — foot and half deep, and not a sidewalk shovelled yet! Hurry up, old Lazybones, or Teddy and Jim'll be ahead of us!"

It is hardly light, and Jack, as he rubs off a corner of the frosty pane, can see nothing in the street below but one unbroken mass of pure white snow. How pretty Ferry Court looks in its new dress! Why! even the old ash-heaps, the refuse barrels, and the broken bottles, stand out like so many groups of carved marble.

But that isn't what Jack is thinking about, as he stands there at the window with hands in his pocket! The truth is, the little fellow is cold, hungry and sleepy — he was out last night till nearly midnight selling newspapers, — and though he wouldn't miss these extra "jobs" for the world, he doesn't quite relish the idea of starting off without his breakfast.

"I say, Mike, do yer think they'll give us a bite at the big house 'round the corner?"

"Like enough, Jack, there's a jolly fat cook there! — but hold on a minute. It's *dry* snow — just like powder. We'll need the big broom and shovel both."

"All right. Start along, Slow-coach, I'll take one and you take t'other."

And Jack, foremost in everything, leads off with the great iron shovel shouldered like a musket, while Mike, with the old twig broom, lags on behind.

Half way down the street they meet little Nicholas Grasaro, who means to get a "job," too, before it is time to give his customers a "shine." They are old comrades — the three boys, — for though Nicholas is only a boot-black not "up" in the newspaper trade like Jack and Mike, they all belong to the same "fraternity," and meet daily at the "Newsboys' and Boot-blacks' School," down on North Margin Street.

Jack and Mike have the true-Irish brogue, but

Nicholas is an Italian boy, as you can tell at once when you get a full look at his face. These extra "jobs" he is always on the lookout for, — at least, he well understands how much the extra pennies are needed at home; and I'm sure I don't know what would become of the family if it were not for little Nicholas. The poor father has long been helpless from paralysis, and I fear he will never leave his bed again. The mother tries to earn what she can, and at one time she had a fruit-stand. But there are many days when the sick man needs her constant care, and Nicholas' little sister is hardly able to look after the stand all by herself.

So they must depend upon what Nicholas can earn; and the "shines" — notwithstanding the nice place the little fellow has, down in Brattle Street — seldom "net" more than four dollars a week. An extra job, therefore, is well worth the trouble of rising an hour or two earlier to secure, and Nicholas knows he will have beside — what poor Jack and Mike know nothing about — a warm welcome when he gets back!

But the clock has struck seven, and the boys' tracks in the snow are already followed by larger and heavier ones.

"We mustn't let the city men git ahead of us!"

shouts Jack, as he makes a bee line to the "big house 'round the corner."

A ring at the area bell, a smiling assent from the jolly-faced cook, and Jack and Mike begin work in good earnest.

"I say, though, didn't that steak smell bunkum, Mike?"

"Yis, and the coffee what steamed on the stove! Let's hurry up and p'raps we'll get a smack! I wonder how Nick gets along with that one little shovel of his? Let's lend him a hand if we git through first."

Jack demurs a little at Mike's last proposition, but scrapes on with dogged persistency.

"Whew! it make's a fellow's fingers ache, though!" exclaimed Mike, as he stops a moment to blow vigorously upon the purple tips. If he hadn't looked up just then he wouldn't have seen the tall beaver. But look up he did, and there was the tempting target! Quick as a flash the broom was dropped, the snowball fired, and off rolled the new beaver way across the street, on a revolving tour of exploration. And off started the repentant little Arab, the very same instant, in hot pursuit! I'm glad to say he didn't take the offered dime from unsuspecting young Harvard, for it was pure mischief — nothing else — that prompted this sudden episode.

All up and down the street, on either side, the Shovel Brigade are now busily at work. Yes, and all the neighboring streets, too, are alive with these animated silhouettes — for just like shadow pictures the black figures stand out on the white background!

If you open your window and listen, the scraping shovel, the swirring brooms, and the occasional thuds of snow sound, in the crisp electric atmosphere, not unlike the chords of a distant "street band."

Here and there you will note the bright badge of some wide-awake policeman, who is on the lookout for neglected sidewalks; for although it is a well-known regulation in our good city that, if a snow-storm comes at night, every pavement must be clear before nine o'clock the next morning, there are some sleepy households that need constant reminders. Should the snow come in the daytime it must, according to law, be removed in the space of an hour after it has stopped falling — an excellent rule, if it were only carried out; but often the work is delayed, or so poorly done that treacherous spots are left, and many serious accidents occur in consequence.

Jack and Mike, however, have finished their "job" in the most approved style this morning. To be sure, in spite of its depth, it was a light snow — dry, feathery, and far easier to remove than the wet, heavy

snows that sometimes come; but the boys are faithful little fellows, and whether the work be light or heavy, they always do their "level best." That is why the owner of the big house was so ready to employ them this morning; he watched them from the window last time, and remembers how well they managed the troublesome drifts that blew around the corner. He is a kind-hearted man, and Jack is not doomed to disappointment this morning; the jolly-faced cook has orders to have a good hot breakfast all ready for them when the work is done; and then, besides, there is a bright silver dime waiting on the table for each of them.

Little Nicholas is just as hungry and just as deserving, but all he receives for his hard work is a nickel five cent piece! Well, that, to be sure, is better than nothing — it will buy a loaf of bread at the baker's round the block; but why couldn't the thoughtless millionaire have opened his heavy purse a bit wider to poor little Nicholas?

The boy cannot bear to go home with this meagre sum; so, while Jack and Mike are feasting in the warm kitchen, he looks about for another "job." This time he is more fortunate; a sweet-faced old lady taps on the window to him, for she has seen his faithful labor across the way — somebody always sees

faithful labor sooner or later, — and Nicholas' black eyes fairly dance when she offers him twenty-five cents for cleaning steps, pavement and upper balcony.

Two hours later the boys, rather tired, to be sure, after their hard morning's work, but all aglow with exercise and excitement combined, meet in the little school-room and compare notes with their comrades.

They are a whole hour late, and all truancy or unnecessary tardiness is always punished as it deserves; but this morning the kind teacher is quite ready to excuse them, for she knows all about "her boys," and is as glad as they are when these extra jobs come, and they can carry home a few extra pennies.

I have given you a peep into two of these homes; Would you like to see another? Come then with Louis, another little Italian boy, who has earned fifty cents this morning by "shoveling" and "shining" both. He is in a hurry to tell the good news, and scampers up the four rickety flights, two steps at a time.

It is one of the darkest, dingiest, most unwholesome rooms in the whole tenement, but it is all the home that Louis knows anything about. A rusty cooking-stove, with clothes drying on the line just over it, an old mattrass in the corner, a table with the

remains of cold potatoes, maccaroni, etc., still upon it, one or two broken chairs, and the baby's cradle, make up the furniture of the room.

But five little children, ranging all the way from six months upward, fill whatever empty spaces are left, and unless you step carefully you may tread on some of the little creatures! The mother, who is mending a tiny garment whlle its owner is asleep, welcomes Louis with a sunny smile. No matter how tired or discouraged she is, there always seems to be a rich fund of love in this mother's heart for each and all of her little brood.

The father — it is the same old story, but just as sad nevertheless, — loves his bottle better than he does his helpless family: and Louis, ever since he was a wee baby, has seen so much of the misery caused by strong drink, that I hope he will take warning and never touch it himself.

That bright half-dollar! How the mother's eyes glisten as Louis twirls it on the table and asks her what he shall buy first! A hard question surely, when so many things are needed; but hunger is the loudest call after all, and there are a dozen eager mouths all waiting to be fed. Louis will earn another "fifty" perhaps, at his stand this afternoon; but unexpected jobs, like the morning shoveling, will

always seem like especial "god-sends."

Just think how many miles of pavement, all within the limits of the city, have been traveled to-day by this indefatigable Shovel Brigade; yet there is a deal of "after work" still, for the crow-bar and pick-ax-recruits. These last are generally strong, able-bodied men employed by the city authorities; and there is scarcely a day after the first snow comes when you will not find them at work somewhere. Often the horse-car tracks become clogged, or the gutters need attention. Then, the snow itself, after it is shovelled from the pavements must be carted, or rather *sledded* off; and this work gives employment to a large number of men and boys throughout the winter months.

Truly it *is* an "ill wind" that blows nobody any good," and when these driving snowstorms come, spoiling the skating for so many boys and blocking the trains, let us remember Jack and Mike, Nicholas, Louis and all their little comrades, and the men with families who are eagerly waiting for a "job," and always hail the "falling skies" with undisguised delight.

THE LITTLE ASH-PICKERS.

Did you ever put your hand into a "grab-bag" If so, you know just how little Rosa feels as, standing on tip-toe, she pokes her long stick down into the ashes!

There are just fifty of them —great, dusty, ugly barrels — waiting with open mouths on each side of the open alley-way between Boylston and Newbury Streets, and Rosa with her hook and her bag is the very first one "on the spot" this morning. By and by the city carts will come, but just now the field is all her own, and the little girl goes to work with an energy worthy some better employment.

"Hullo! What's this?"

An old coffee-pot, sure enough, with the handle knocked off! Rosa looks it all over, taps it with her knuckles, holds it up to the light, and considers. The

bottom is sound, the cover tight. Yes, it is a deal better than the old one at home, so she tucks it into the old tow bag, and pokes again. Dear me! what a fumbling there is this time! The little red hood is all enveloped in dust as Rosa draws out, one after the other, a pair of old, battered boots, minus every button. But, beating out the ashes, she shoves her little bare feet into the discarded French kids, and pronounces them a "perfect fit." She will find plenty of buttons before she gets through with those fifty barrels, and with big needle and stout thread the little cobbler knows she can make the old boots "most as good as new."

It is the bits of half-burned coal that she came out so early for this morning — breakfast can't be cooked till she brings her bag home — but coffee-pots and boots are not to be found every day, and Rosa is on the lookout now for new treasures. Here is an old hat that will do for little Tony; and away down to the bottom of barrel number five gleam the shining sides of an old copper boiler! With furtive glances up and down the alley, Rosa seizes this last "find," crams it into her bag, and scuffles off around the corner as fast as her heavy load and her new boots will allow. A copper boiler! Just think what luck! Why, it's a regular "bonanza" — at least, so the old junk dealers

say, and who should know better than they? Perhaps you wonder, as I did, what possible use could be made of an old boiler with the bottom burned off. It's a secret of the trade, but I will tell you, for that pretty galvanized coal-hod by the grate knows the whole story! "Once upon a time" it was — would you believe it? — an old dilapidated boiler itself! But from ash-barrel to junk-shop, from furnace to hard-ware, it has gone so far up in the social scale that now even the stiff poker and tongs are quite willing to keep company with it.

There is a heavy clatter down in the alleyway now, for the city carts have come; and trudging just behind is a little tatterdemalion with an old basket on his arm. He helps the men put back the empty barrels, and for this service they let him look over the rubbish before it is thrown into the big blue carts. But little Rosa, as you and I know, has already had the "first pick," of five barrels, and Billy wonders he doesn't find much of anything for a while but bits of coal which Rosa hadn't time to take. Billy, by the way, is a famous little coal picker. Down by the wharves and the freight depots, he finds so many pieces that he doesn't have to depend upon the refuse of ash barrels; although I see he is very ready to take whatever he can find here.

One morning, just about light, there was an alarm

of fire that started Billy to his feet at once. Now you must know that to run after the big "Steamer" is one of Billy's greatest delights; but his passion for picking up coal is still greater, and hose wagon, steamer and all, were suddenly deserted that morning for a tempting "dump," that caught his keen eye as he scampered down the street. An hour later, when the firemen came back, Billy's old basket was heaped to the brim, and I don't know but the enterprising little fellow will "set up trade" for himself, since he finds he can sell his coal for twenty cents a bushel.

Perhaps my Wide Awake readers are wondering what the "*dump*" is, where Billy lays in his stock.

Down by the Albany depot, in various vacant lots throughout the city, and over in East Boston, there are certain places where the city carts regularly deposit their contents. These forlorn heaps of debris are the so-called "*dumps*," and men, women and children may be seen busily at work here almost any hour of the day. Some collect old bones that they sell at half a cent a pound; others take only paper rags; and here is the little fellow who is on the look out for bits of old iron.

It is curious to notice how much honor for each other's specialties there is among this ragged crowd. Every bag is as secure from pilfering as if it were un-

der lock and key; and any man, woman or child, who dares trespass on somebody's else "*dump*," is looked upon as no better than a sneak and a thief.

There seems to be scarcely anything in these motley heaps that is not put to some use. Even old hair combings are straightened out and made into puffs, curls, frizzes, and — nobody knows what! Old bottles find a market, too, and bits of leather, wood and rope are always carefully gathered up. Sometimes, gold and silver coins, spoons, forks, rings, watch-charms, and various other pieces of jewelry, are found; but it is not often that such articles reach the "*dump*," even when through carelessness they find their way into ash barrels.

There are many wonderful stories told; but, after all, it is by the careful "gathering up of fragments" — not by any special "luck" — that these ash-pickers manage, sometimes, to get *sixteen and twenty dollars a week* just from their "pickings!"

In a single season nine tons of coal were collected at the East Boston dumps, and this is but one item among many.

Here is a ragged old man with his wheelbarrow and empty bags; let us follow him and see what he will find to-day. Little Tommy, only nine years old, is his constant companion, and I don't know what

the old man would do without the bright eyes and nimble fingers of this tiny boy.

"I say, daddy, we'll have to hurry, for I can hear the big carts coming; there's lots going to the '*dump*' to-day!"

"Hey?"

And the old man puts his hand to his ear as Tommy repeats in a higher sharper key the warning words. It is evident he hears this time, for the jog trot is suddenly quickened, and it is as much as Tommy can do to keep pace with the rattling, squeaking wheelbarrow. They are just in time to have the first "haul," and with miser-like delight the old man crams into one bag every rag and scrap of paper he can find, while Tommy's smutty fingers are gathering up the coal.

But look! there is still another bag in the wheelbarrow — yes, *two* more, that they mean to carry back "chuck full." Into one goes all sorts of rusty nails, old screws, broken locks, bits of wire, iron filings, etc.; into the other is crammed anything that can be converted into firewood, such as old cigar and fruit boxes, pieces of rotten shingles, laths, chips, — no matter what, so long as it can come under the head of "kindlings."

You see the old man understands "business;" he

sorts out his findings with as much care and method as a salesman arranges his new goods on shelves and counters. A sharp cuff on the ear, and Tommy suddenly remembers that he has made a mistake. The old man has found two iron nails in his "paper bag," and such carelessness is altogether too much for any ash-picker's patience. Tommy hangs down his head, whimpers a little, and then goes to work again with tingling ears, but a better memory.

All day long they keep at work, wheeling the barrow back and forth, till it grows too dark to pick up even coal. And when I tell you that for three whole years the old man and Tommy have worked together in this way, at this same old dump in East Boston, I think you will understand how it is they have been able not only to earn a living but to lay up pennies for a rainy day.

At one time, the neighbors used to notice a little girl in man's hat and coat, who worked at a part of the dump not far from the old man and Tommy. Poor child! if you could have seen her and the wretched place she called home, I know you would have pitied and longed to help her. I believe she ran away, at last, from the cruel woman who beat her without mercy, and drove her out to work at the "*dump*," no matter how cold or how stormy the weather might be.

THE LITTLE ASH-PICKER.

Sometimes the truant officers find dozens of children here among the ash-heaps in school hours; indeed it is a frequent excuse with a certain class when they are late, or absent from school for a number of days, that they "hadn't no coal t'home, and so they had to go to the "*dump*." There is one little girl, — I've forgotten her name — who actually picked up all the coal used by the family from April till November.

Down on Church Green, on the right hand side as you leave Summer Street, are a number of old junk shops that are well worth a visit. Here it is that many of our little ash pickers find a market for their "treasures;" and I'm going to give you a picture of one just as I saw it, not a great while ago.

The door was wide open, and the little, dark, low room was just packed — way to the ceiling and way to the sidewalk — with all manner of outlandish things. There were all sorts of broken tools, rusty bolts, nuts, chains, parts of iron railings, old kettles, pans, horse shoes, etc.; then there were great tow bags crammed so full of paper rags that half of their many-colored contents were scattered on the floor, and thinking of the mischief a single match might do here I didn't wonder the junk dealer had hung up in a conspicuous place the warning words, "No smoking allowed." There was only a narrow space

left just in the middle of the room, and even here you could scarcely take a step without treading upon something.

A short distance from this junk shop is another, where one window is filled with tailor "chips," and reading the sign over the door you will see that this shop makes a specialty of "paper stock." A little farther on and you will find a "Black and White Smith," whose doorway is curiously decorated with old iron cables, broken anchors, rusty kettles, pans, and old, old things I had never seen before "on sea or land."

They tell me these old junk dealers make heaps of money out of the seeming rubbish brought to them by the ash pickers; and I think it is easy to understand when we consider how many things in daily use are made from this same old "junk."

For our pretty superfine stationery, our books, yes, even the pages of "*Wide Awake*," maybe, are made from the motley "paper stock;" while from bits of melted glass come our window panes, and our lamp shades; and as to the old rusty metal, why, all manner of kitchen furniture is made from that! Truly the little ash-pickers and the old junk dealers ought to have their reward, for they help not a little in carrying out that twice-repeated command to "*gather up the fragments that nothing may be lost.*"

THE FRUIT-VENDERS.

SHE was selling grapes the first time I saw her, — great purple bunches that looked so tempting I didn't wonder half her stock was gone, though it was still early in the day. Such a happy face as it was under the old brown hat! It had been a *very* successful day, and little Amelia had "good news" to carry home.

By-and-by I'm going to tell you all about her home, her good auntie, and the little cousins who seemed to her like brothers and sisters; but, first of all, I want to give you a picture of little Amelia herself.

Perched on her rough board seat, you will find her almost any day at her special corner, which is far down on "new" Washington Street.

You know a deal is said, now-a-days, about the "nuisance" of these street stands; but I don't believe any skittish horse ever took fright at this innocent little

fruit tray. O, it takes up such a "wee bit" of room at the broad corner! And, as to interfering with the trade of the big fruit stores — why! what are the few cents our little girl earns at her stand, compared to the sales made every day by confectioners, corner grocers, provision merchants, and a host of others who do not call themselves "fruit dealers" at all! O, Consistency, thou *art* a jewel, a rare jewel!

But little Amelia doesn't mean to borrow any trouble. Nobody disturbed her yesterday, and nobody has disturbed her to-day. Really, that tip end of Washington and Elm Streets seems as much her very own as if she had in her pocket the "warranty deed" for it, all signed and witnessed.

"And a very good corner it is," she says to herself, remembering how many people, on their way to the Boston and Maine depot, stop just here for a half dozen oranges, a couple of lemons, or a nice ripe banana to eat on the way.

Sometimes, she can make five dollars a week, but that is only when the weather is fine.

Come with me away down to the North End and I will show you what becomes of all those precious pennies that little Amelia picks up at the "corner."

Such a rickety old tenement house as it used to be! But now, a more manly landlord has cleansed

and put into repair this miserable building, and we need not be afraid to-day to go up the new clean stairway. Two rooms, as neat as neat can be, with a few pictures on the four walls, — the commonest of prints to be sure, but pretty pictures for all that; a nicely scoured floor, a few hard chairs, and a bed in one corner of the larger room where Amelia's uncle, a helpless cripple, lies all day long. This is the home to which our little fruit girl is so eager to carry the news of a successful day. Her own father, in a fit of despondency, shot himself; and then there followed long weary days and weeks when the poor mother, utterly discouraged and heart-broken, grew paler, thinner, weaker, until at last, death came with its longed-for rest, and little Amelia was left without father or mother — all alone in the wide world!

Well, the good auntie, who, with a helpless husband and four little children dependent upon her, had found ways and means to care for her sick sister, now opened heart and home to poor little Amelia.

So, ever since her mother's death she has never known what it was to be without some one to love and care for her, and that, I think, is one secret of her bright happy face; for, if there is only "love at home," we can always work with a light heart and willing hands.

This fruit stand that Amelia and her auntie tend alternately, is the sole means of support of the whole family. And when we stop to think of the seven hungry mouths to feed, and the rent — not less than eight dollars a month — that must be paid for their rooms down on Mechanic Street, it is very easy to see what becomes of all the bright pennies.

Such a brave, cheerful spirit as this noble-hearted woman has shown, ever since the sad accident that crippled her hard-working husband. He was a gardener, she tells me, upon a gentleman's place in Somerville, and one day when pruning trees, he fell in such a way upon the sharp instruments that his spine was very badly hurt. That was four or five years ago and he has not been able to do a day's work since, — indeed, I doubt if he is ever able to do anything more, — but patient Mrs. Vicarro never complains of her hard lot.

"God has taken care of us," she says, "and I am just as *sure* as can be He always will!"

To give her husband every possible comfort and to keep a pleasant home for the little ones, has been her chief desire, and she has worked hard to obtain it. At first, she took in washing and ironing, but that was never so profitable as the fruit stand has been. For, among the Italians in Boston there are a number who

are able to club together and obtain large quantities of fruit at very low prices.

The shrewdest one in the little circle is deputed to make the daily purchase. Much of the fruit is obtained directly of the importers at the wharves, who carefully assort it; that which is likely to keep only a short time, being sold to the agents of the street venders at far lower prices than the fruit stores pay for the carefully selected fruits.

North Market Street is also a busy scene early in the morning, many of the little fruit-sellers resorting thither to buy their daily stock-in-trade.

"And I've always found good friends," says Mrs. Viccaro, whose cheery face fairly beamed as she told me how they had been helped over the "hard places."

As I write, another picture comes up before me.

It is late in the afternoon, and a ray of the bright golden sunset streams into the narrow court and rests lovingly upon a rough box of house plants, high up on the brick wall. In one window is a large English ivy, so green and thrifty I know its owner loves and cares for what is beautiful, but with this exception just see how forlorn and dreary it is — this miserable, filthy Court!

There are all sorts of broken things scattered

about, and in one corner an old umbrella man is looking over his "stock in trade." Babies in arms, and little creatures just big enough to toddle about, crowd together upon the dirty steps, while their mothers strive to catch a breath of fresh air, and do their week's mending at the same time. Old grandmothers are here, too, with funny looking caps; and out of every window, almost, there are two or three unkempt heads peering down on the scene below.

And oh, such a jabbering from top to bottom! Of course, it is all in Italian; even the babies don't seem to cry like other children. And there is one little black-eyed morsel with arms and feet strapped down to a board — like an Indian pappoose, I was going to say; but, dear me, it looks more like an Egyptian mummy!

"Her make straight," says the proud little mother in broken Italian.

The baby looks up at us with eyes *so* big and *so* black and *so* round and *so* wise that we haven't a word to say. But when little Rosanna comes running to us with her basket of fruit, we can better understand what makes the ten-year-old child so very small and slight for her age. And did you ever see an Italian boy or girl that was *not* under size? Poor little creatures! This curious custom may possibly

LITTLE AMELIA.

help to make them straight and supple, but, hindering all muscular movement for months and months, how it must retard their growth and strength in every way.

Rosanna Vorpiano! Isn't that a musical name? And doesn't the child look as if she had just stepped out of a "*genre*" picture? Her old checked gingham dress is partly covered by a little apron, tied behind with an old shoe-string; and the buttons on her dress, as diverse in color and shape as "Joseph's coat," give a very funny effect as she turns suddenly round into the broad light. It is a warm day, but she has thrown over her tight jet braids an old knitted hood — black and purple, — and the frizzy curls that blow about her forehead look like so many imps that have come out to frolic with her roguish black eyes.

As she stands there, leaning against the steps with that old basket on her arm, half-filled with bright red apples, I long to put her upon canvas.

She has made fifty cents to-day, — can't you hear the dimes jingling in her pocket, — and to-morrow she means to start very, very early to market.

Up and down Tremont and Washington Streets, through Temple Place, Winter, Bromfield Street, — up long flights of stairs into offices and "composing rooms," and into scores of close rooms that swarm

with heated and thirsty toilers, — wherever she can find a customer — little Rosanna goes, up and down, up and down, all day long. She doesn't aspire to a "stand" yet; thinks she would like to go to school; but *I'm* much afraid this roving sort of street-life will bring out all the "gypsey" in our little Italian girl and utterly unfit her for any kind of study.

Oh! there is so much want and suffering all about us! Do my "WIDE AWAKE" readers realize, I wonder, how many of their brothers and sisters are toiling, all day long, just for a place to lay their head and a bit of bread to eat! Amelia and Rosanna are not imaginary characters, — what I have told you about them is true *all through*! — and then there are so many others like them! Alike, and yet different, too; for each of the three hundred fruit stands, scattered about our Boston streets, and every little basket peddler, have a story "all their own."

And did you ever notice what a variety there is in the stands themselves? Sometimes you will find them nicely painted, — green seems to be the favorite color — and, very often, the tray is placed on wheels so that it can be easily carried about. Then there is the big broad basket with its flat cover that serves for a table, while the under part is used as a sort of refrigerator. This is certainly more picturesque

than the wooden tray, but I don't believe it is half as convenient.

One day I watched with a deal of interest the "setting up of a stand" on the Common. It was a very modest affair — two little saw-horses, and just a rough board thrown across, — but everything was arranged in "apple pie" order. There was a nice white cloth to cover the uneven planks, and then, one after another, the little hand baskets were emptied of their contents. Of course, every apple and pear was duly polished with a bit of rag before it was laid on the cloth; and, somehow, the biggest and fairest *always* found their way to the top.

At the main entrance to the Common, on Charles Street, is an old woman whose weather-beaten face shows a long apprenticeship in that trade. On cold days she protects herself from the bleak east winds by a wide long strip of black enamel cloth, which she fastens to the high fence just behind her; and a very nice background it makes for her odd little stand and her picturesque self. As the weather changes from biting cold to scorching heat, old umbrellas are substituted; but, no matter what the season may be, our fruit venders will always be found at their posts.

To the passers-by, it may seem an idle, romantic

sort of life; but they know nothing of the hard labor done at home, night and morning, to give this leisure through the day. In little baskets and crates and carts and wheelbarrows, all the unsold fruit is carried home every night; and every morning it must be carried to the "stand," and polished and re-arranged. And many are the stockings and mittens that have been knit by these indefatigable little women, while waiting for customers.

The constant exposure to all sorts of weather renders the fruit-vender's life anything but a desirable one; still, to a large class of deserving poor, it offers one means of earning an honest livelihood. And, while these modest little stands do not interfere with public travel, it does seem as if our good city ought both to protect and to patronize them.

THE BOOTBLACKS.

"HAVE a 'shine,' mister? Only five cents!" It is a very small voice from a very small boy, and there is such a crowd hurrying to and fro that little Fred can hardly make himself heard.

But he has his regular customers who know just where to find him and who pay him twenty-five cents a week. And then that particular corner of his, down on Hanover and Blackstone Streets, is such a good stand that the little fellow seldom fails to earn forty or fifty cents each day. Sometimes, on Sundays, he can make from a dollar to a dollar and a half; but then these are always considered "red letter days" for the whole bootblack brigade.

Paul, an older brother, has a stand on Causeway

Street, and you would have laughed to see how the two boys managed when they first "set up trade."

Of course there were the license papers and the bright silver badges (just like the newsboys' I told you about) that they had to get from the city. But then, there was a great deal more to be done before they were ready to give their customers a "shine."

A rough pine box, — that was the beginning of the "stock in trade" — and since they both wanted one the two boys started off together.

"I say, Fred, let's go down to the 'tobaker' store on Causeway Street," suggested bright, black-eyed Paul. "Mebbe we'll find something there!"

"All right!" shouted Fred. "And lookee here — why not take a big long feller and go halves?"

Now, it does seem strange that an empty box should have cost the boys a single penny, but I know they had to pay ten cents for the particular piece of lumber Fred selected; and when they had sawed it in two, the next thing in order was to have a wooden shoe, or rather a "last," put upon each half.

With a good box of carpenter's tools they might, perhaps, have done the work themselves; but to try it with a jack-knife was about as hopeless a job as the old woman undertook when she tried to whittle down a crow-bar into a knitting-needle. Lo, another ten

cents — or rather twenty cents, for you see there were two boxes to be mounted, — was paid to the old shoemaker who had done the job for other bootblacks, dozens of times before.

"Ain't it nice, though?" exclaimed Paul, as he drew his little brown hand over the smooth white last.

And, really, it did begin to look like business when the boys fastened the leather straps to their neat little boxes, slung them across their shoulders, and marched down Hanover Street merrily whistling "Mulligan Guards."

Now, for the blacking. Should they patronize Bixby, Day & Martin, or that new firm with the unpronounceable name? It was a hard question to decide; but as Fred insisted that the latter was the best, — all the boys said so! — Paul yielded the point, and for three cents each the boxes of blacking were bought and pocketed.

"A 'dauber,' next! hurrah for a 'dauber'!" shouted Paul.

"And a 'shiner,' too!" added Fred, as they counted out the last of the bright pennies their fond, hard-working mother had given them for "capital."

"Dear me! it will take every one," sighed Paul; "but then, we must have 'em!"

"Of course we must!" echoed Fred. "And then, you see, they'll last — O, forever!"

Paul, however, examines the brushes very carefully before parting with those precious pennies. "For sometimes, you know," he whispered to Fred, "they do cheat a feller awfully with old moth-eaten things."

Forty cents for the "shiner," a few cents less for the "dauber," and now their stock in trade is complete. No, not quite; for they must each have a bit of carpeting, the careful mother says, to save the knees of their trowsers. This, however, needn't cost them a penny, for she has found two strips that will be just the thing. Yes, and here are two little overalls, dark blue and snuff brown, that they can draw right over their jackets. Dear me! how I wish all our little bootblacks had good thoughtful mothers like Mrs. Anato.

But Fred and Paul are more highly favored than most of their comrades. In spite of poverty, they have a home and a father and mother to love and care for them; while here is Antonio Deveroni, brought up in a bar-room; and little Frank Dondaro, whose mother is dead and whose father is just a wretched drunkard.

I want to tell you, by the way, more of Antonio; and if you would like to know how he looks, just

imagine Dickens' "Fat Boy," with jet-black hair banged over his forehead, and those great, liquid, Italian eyes, that have just about the same expression in them, as a big Newfoundland dog's. Antonio's stand for blacking boots is down on South Market Street, and his home is in Ferry Court. But I always think of him just as I saw him at the North Margin Street school.

He was nearly an hour late, and came creeping — or rather *rolling* in, — with a downcast, crestfallen look.

"Job!" was the only excuse he had to offer, and I'm afraid it wasn't any excuse at all; for, if he began sawing wood at eight o'clock as he said, there was no reason in the world why he couldn't have left off when school-time came. The truth is, he is a lazy boy and doesn't like to study. But the few, firm, kind words from Mr. Wright, the city officer, who was waiting for the tardy boys, did far more good than any amount of scolding or whipping could have done. And I don't believe Antonio will be "behind time" again, for a very, very long while.

Stupid and indolent, he is withal so good-natured, kind-hearted and generous, that he is a great favorite with the boys; and really, there is the making of a noble man in Antonio. But, oh dear! that dreadful liquor saloon down in Ferry Court! Just as soon as

he is out of school and back from work, his father makes him tend at the bar, and unless some kind Providence interferes, I'm afraid the poor boy, so easily influenced by good or evil, will be dragged down into what the sailors call the "Black Sea."

Henry Gardella, the fine, manly boy who sits near Antonio, has, I am glad to say, far better influences thrown about him. When he came into the school, some five years ago, he didn't know his letters. And he was, moreover, such a wee bit of a boy that to reach the platform his teacher didn't, to be sure, put him into a pint-pot — like the little man in Mother Goose,— but she did perch him upon a big wash-basin turned upside down. Now, he measures nearly six feet.

I do wish you could hear him recite a lesson in geography. You see he has come right from his stand at the Crawford House, and his smutty face and hands, his soiled shirt-sleeves, and old faded-out overalls are anything but becoming. Never mind! He knows all about Asia Minor, can name all the rivers in Europe, tell you the latest source of the Nile, rattle off the lakes of British America, bound all the Western territories, and — well! tell you just about everything in geography that you *don't quite exactly* remember yourself.

And just think, my little WIDE AWAKE scholars,

A Boot-black.

how very few advantages these poor boys can have. Two hours of study each day through the school year, — that is all, — and very few can have even this after they are fifteen. For the licenses, making this time in school one of the most important conditions, are usually granted to boys between the ages of ten and fifteen. After this, the newsboys, the bootblacks, and the little street peddlers, generally learn a trade or take up some kind of work that hinders any more school attendance.

Such a ragged, dirty, little crowd as they are, this score or more of bootblacks, that daily gather in the small school-room on North Margin Street! It seems hardly large enough for newsboys, peddlers and all; but as the school has two sessions, part come from nine to eleven in the morning, and the other half from one to three in the afternoon.

Looking into their brown faces and great black eyes, you don't need to hear the strange outlandish names that show their Italian parentage. But I think it is a little curious that while our newsboys are made up of Germans, Irish and Americans, as well as Italians, these little bootblacks are, every one of them, Italian boys. To be sure, the whole brigade numbers only forty here in Boston, where our newsboys count up to, at least, three hundred; but since

boot-blacking is, on the whole, so profitable, I wonder some of our enterprising little German, Irish, or Yankee boys have not taken up the business.

Upon an average, Fred and Paul can each earn four dollars a week; while it is seldom that a newsboy can make — even when including the extra Sunday sales — more than three dollars. Still, the bootblack trade isn't quite so steady as the selling of newspapers; for through the winter months the little fellows have but few customers; and if they were not allowed to take up "inside jobs," many of them would find it hard to make a living.

The licenses given to bootblacks by the city government, always assign the places for their stands; and they are not allowed to make any change unless by special permit. But if they are quiet and well-behaved, no objection is made to their stepping into offices, saloons, depots, or hotel entrances in the neighborhood of their stands; and it is in such places that the little bootblacks find a good many extra jobs, even in stormy weather.

Years ago, the boys used to get ten cents a shine, but there has been so much competition since the "high-toned" stands made their appearance that no one will pay, nowadays, more than five cents a shine.

Perhaps you are wondering what the "high-toned stands" may be. Well, it is an odd name to give them, but that is what the little fellows call those big stands with the comfortable arm-chairs and the patent iron foot-rests, where grown-up men do the "shining." Many crippled soldiers make a living in this way; and on Court Street, at Boylston Market, in numerous alley ways, on the Common, — indeed, all through the city you will find the "high-toned" establishments of these dangerous rivals in trade.

The little fellows look with wistful eyes upon the grand "out-fit" that must have cost "such heaps of money." But if they can't give a comfortable seat to their customers — what of that? It isn't a chair and patent foot-rests, but just a pair of clean, highly-polished boots that is wanted.

It might, perhaps, console our little Boston bootblacks if they knew their London brothers carried, just as they do, a small box slung across their shoulders which contains all their "stock in trade."

The "Ragged School Shoeblack Societies" number a great many recruits in London, and you can always tell them by their dark gray suits piped with red, their bright jackets, and peculiar caps with number and badge attached. Since the "brigade" was formed, nine hundred thousand dollars have been

earned by these enterprising little fellows, and I don't doubt but that our Boston bootblacks are doing quite as well in proportion to their numbers.

Rather a dirty, disagreeable trade, my WIDE AWAKE readers may think; but let us not forget that a great part of Dickens' early life was spent in work just as lowly as this. I don't know that he ever actually blacked boots for a living, but I do know that with other poor boys (in ragged aprons and paper caps), he used to paste labels upon blacking bottles.

After all, it isn't so much *what* we do as *how* we do it; and the little bootblack who does his work faithfully, is worthy of far more honor than the better-dressed, but idle, thoughtless boys, who stoop to make fun of his smutty fingers.

THE FLOWER-VENDERS.

BEAUTIFUL Fresh Pond—blue and sparkling in the summer sunlight,—far behind the city spires and the glittering dome of the State House,—and, here, just in the fore-ground of our picture, five little barefoot boys with hats thrown back, and ragged pants rolled up to their knees.

"My! Ain't it nice and cool, though!" exclaimed Tommy.

"And ain't them lilies just 'stunners'!" echoed little, freckled-faced Ned.

They have had a long, hot tramp from the city this morning, but that is all forgotten now. O, that cool, beautiful water! The boys are almost tempted to take a "plunge"; but time is precious, pennies must be earned, and there are the great creamy lilies all ready for the first picker.

"If we only had a boat now," sighs little Jack.

"Pooh! who wants a boat, as can wade like a duck! Look'ee here, boys, I'll be cap'n and you foller!" shouts Tommy, suiting the action to the word.

And so the procession moves on, with many frightened cries from little Jack, who lags behind, and somehow manages to fall into all the muddy places! But now the boys are knee-deep in the water, and although the very biggest lilies and the very pinkest buds always do seem to be just out of reach, and although many a dainty blossom near at hand snaps its long stem in the pulling, not many minutes have passed before each little fellow has his arms full of the fragrant "water queens."

O, how fresh and pretty they are! No wonder the sick lady who sees them from her carriage wants a handful, and bids her coachman call the boys. Tommy is the first to hear — he is always first in everything! — and before the other boys are out of the water, he has scrambled through the bushes, reached the lady's carriage, and sold all his lilies, at a cent apiece!

But now he has none to carry back to the city, and the other boys — a little jealous of Tommy's success — will not wait for him to gather more. The little fellow, however, is equal to the occasion. With

twenty-five cents in his pocket, he feels quite rich enough to buy at wholesale; and since "a bird in the hand is always worth two in the bush," Ned, Jack, Michael and Teddy each agree to sell him a few of their lilies at a very low figure. So the bunches and the pennies are pretty equally divided, and the five boys, in the best of humor again, start off together for the city. Oh dear! how fast the beautiful blossoms wither!

"We'll hev' to hev' a tub or a pail to put 'em in, just as soon as ever we can!" says little Jack.

"Umph! I mean to sell mine 'fore they need a tub!" says Ned.

"So do I, but then you see I mightn't, after all!" says Jack, who has a large bump of caution, and is rather apt to look upon the dark side.

The boys sell, however, a few more of their lilies, on the way back; and when they separate at Bowdoin Square little Jack feels quite encouraged. He and Ned are going up and down Washington Street, but, first of all, he runs home for his mother's old blue floor pail.

"It'll be sort o' heavy to lug about, but thin I know it'll pay!" says Jack to himself, as he dips the drooping white beauties down into the cool, fresh water. With the brightest of lily smiles they thank him, and

everybody that passes exclaims at their beauty. No fear, little Jack, but you will sell all your lilies to-day!

Tommy prefers Tremont Street. It was down by St. Paul's Church that I first saw him, but that was weeks ago when the trailing arbutus came. With an eye to effect, he had fixed his little bouquets in a fanciful manner, sticking the stems through the iron fence, so that only the pretty pink and white flowers in their evergreen circle could be seen.

"Fresh Plymouth May flowers, only ten cents a bunch!"

Such a clear, shrill voice, and such a bright little face! He had sold a dollar's worth already, but early in the day the bunches had brought fifteen and twenty cents apiece. Then, he was only Mr. Somebody's agent, but now that the lilies have come he is selling for himself.

"Yer see, m'am," he exclaimed, "May flowers can't be got round here. They pick 'em down to Plymouth and the Cape — where the pink pond lilies come from, yer know,— and sometimes they git a few of these 'butus flowers at Marshfield and Scituate. I s'pose boys there git five cents a bunch for 'em, thin they're sint up to Boston by express, all wrapped up

in cotton (the flowers I mean — not the boys!) and the big florists buy 'em."

"But how much do they give you for selling them?"

"Oh! that depends! If we sell 'em for twenty cents a bunch, we git three cents; two for fifteen, and only one for ten!"

But little Julie Sullivan managed to do better than this, or rather her brother did for her. I wonder if you remember Julie's round, freckled face, and bright red hair! She was standing on Winter Street near Music Hall, that particular afternoon; but I imagine she travels up and down Washington and Tremont Streets, too. She is only eight years old, and so shy that you cannot get many words from her.

But, by numerous questions, I find she lives on Essex Street, that her father, a day laborer, had his hand badly hurt on the railroad a few months ago, and that she and her brother Jimmy, who is a few years older, are doing what they can to help the family. The boy had been to the Old Colony Depot himself, bought the flowers from the man who had gathered them at Plymouth; and he and Julie were selling them on the street at lower prices, but far better profits, than keen little Tommy!

And here, by the way, I want to tell you something about this same Jimmy that pleased me very much. He is a strong, hearty boy — not handsome, by any means, but with a good, honest face that you like to look at. Just beside him on Winter Street that day — so near that their baskets touched — stood lame Johnnie Collins.

Both boys were calling out, "Nice Plymouth May flowers!" to the passers-by, and both were very eager to sell their bunches. At last, a lady stopped and looked into each basket. Timid little Johnnie leaned forward on his crutch, anxious to sell, if possible; and, looking at Jimmy's face, I saw a real battle was going on, though he said not a word.

The lady evidently wanted but one bouquet, and, although Jimmy's flowers were equally large and fresh, she seemed more inclined to patronize Johnnie's basket. Now, instead of urging his own flowers upon the lady, as I am very sure some boys would have done, Jimmy at once devoted all his energies to the selling of Johnnie's bouquets.

"There, mum," he said, pointing to one of the prettiest bunches in the lame boy's basket, "that's only ten cents, and it's rale fresh, mum!"

Johnnie looks up gratefully; and, with eager, un-

One of the Flower Girls.

selfish interest, Jimmy goes on to tell the lady how Johnnie was run over, down by the Albany Depot.

"Why, mum! he was in the hospital for months; and he hasn't any toes, mum, but the big one, on that foot as is left!"

Before this explicit explanation, however, the lady has bought Johnnie's bunch of flowers, and has promised to come and see both him and Jimmy.

At the entrance of one of our large hotels here in Boston, you will frequently see, at noon, and early in the evening, a little flaxen-haired girl, with button-hole bouquets to sell. She is rather tall of her age, has a sweet, gentle face, and looks as if she might have a story, doesn't she? Well, here it is, just as little blue-eyed Mary told it to me herself; and though it does "read like a book" I find it all true.

"I was nine years old, m'am, when I first began to sell flowers; but that was four years ago. You see we were very poor. Father was dead, and mother was sick in bed. I was the oldest, and there were lots of little ones younger than me. One day mother was sicker than usual, and we hadn't a bit of coal in the house, nor anything to eat. Mother had just twenty-five cents left in her pocket-book — that was all — but I happened to remember how an aunt of

mine used to make a good deal of money by selling flowers. So I asked mother to let me take the quarter and see what I could do with it. Well, she let me have it, and I went right to a florist and got some flowers — it don't take many, you know, for a buttonhole, just a little bit of green and a few buds are enough — and then I went around to the St. James and some other hotels, to sell them. Folks were real kind, m'am, and I made fifty cents, on that first quarter!

"Ever since then, I've kept on selling flowers; I never go near the saloons, m'am, but I have found good sales for my bouquets at the large hotels. Now, I always come here, for the ladies and gentlemen know me, and do a great deal to help me. Sometimes, they give me great, beautiful bouquets, that I can make up into lots of little ones. Here are some of them," and the little girl showed me two or three dainty little bunches — a pansy and white pink with a bit of smilax between — rosebud and heliotrope bouquets — that she sold at fifteen cents apiece.

"They used to give me nice things, too, to carry home to mother — pieces of chicken, you know, and such like — why! there's one particular place in the dining-room now, where they put my brown paper bag; and I'm always sure to find it full when I go home at night! Mother died last winter about Christ-

mas time, so I live with grandmother now. Usually, I earn about six dollars a week, that I carry home to her, but sometimes I can make ten."

Brave little Mary! She tells her story in the simplest, most unaffected way; but I know that for nearly four years she was the sole support and comfort of that poor sick mother, and those little helpless children!

Now that she is growing into her teens, I wish our little flower-girl might have some better field of labor opened to her. I fear she has never been to school much — her opportunities have been few and far between — but she is very quick, intelligent, and eager to learn. These hotel offices, however unexceptionable they may be, are certainly not the best of school-rooms; and I want such influences thrown about our bright, energetic little Mary that she may grow up into a good, noble, useful woman!

There are other little flower-sellers that I might tell you about — the "Boston-rose-bud" boy who stands on Winter Street, and holds an odd little tray all full of holes, of different sizes, into which he tucks his bouquets. Sometimes, he has pretty little bunches of English violets, and great purple and gold pansies; but "rose buds" seem to be his particular specialty, and he sells them at various prices, according to their

size and variety. Then, in the depots, at the ferries, in the cars, at the entrance of concert rooms and theatres, you will find these little flower-venders, at all most any season of the year. At the holidays, and just before Easter, they sell more, perhaps, than at any other time; but flowers are so fashionable, now-a-days, at all sorts of entertainments, that the trade in them is really very good all through the year.

There are about one hundred florists in, and just about, Boston; and boys and girls are frequently employed by them in picking and arranging the flowers. Very few, however, send children upon the street to sell bouquets. In almost every instance, you will find that the children themselves have bought the flowers at wholesale prices, and so sell independently of the florists.

THE STREET MUSICIANS.

"BUT we must hev the monish."

That was what the old Jew said when Mr. Coles, the kind city officer who looks after these little steeet-waifs, took the child home.

You see he had found Katrina playing upon her violin in one of those dreadful bar-rooms down at the North End.

I don't think the little girl knew (when she stepped inside) what a bad, dangerous place it was; she only thought of the pennies the rude, drunken men had promised her — those bright, beautiful pennies that would save her from cross words and angry blows when she went home at night.

Poor little Katrina! She is only eleven years old yet she has seen more of life — and the dark side of it too — than many thrice her age! It is four years since she came from Italy.

"When we lived there," says little Katrina, "I used to carry stones and mortar on my head to the men that were making buildings. They paid us fifty cents a day, and lots of us used to do that sort of work. We lived near Naples, and I've got two grandmothers and one grandfather there now!"

"And how did it happen that you came to America?"

"Well, father came over first, and when he got back he said I must learn to play the violin. So I took lessons three months, and we paid the man that showed me how, fifteen dollars — five dollars each month."

"And did you like to play?"

"Oh! ever so much — and I learned to sing too! Then father bought me a violin — I guess he paid fifteen dollars for it — and it wasn't long after that we came over in a great big boat. I liked that!"

Little Katrina's black eyes sparkled as she told about that long, nice ride on the water. Evidently, she didn't know what it was to be sea-sick.

"We stayed in New York a while after we landed —

father, mother and me. I couldn't talk English then, but I learned by listening real hard."

Katrina talks very plainly now, only hesitates sometimes in getting hold of the right word.

"Father and me used to go about together, he with the harp and I with the violin. Mother don't know how to play nor sing either."

"And how much could you earn in this way — you and your father?"

"Oh! sometimes fifty cents through the day, and sometimes a dollar or a dollar and a half. We didn't stay long, though, in New York; we lived longest in New Haven. Then father took us to Portland, but you know they don't have saloons there: so we couldn't get much money!"

An honest confession, wasn't it?

"But does your father let you go into saloons to play and sing?"

"He don't like to have me go alone, and I never stay very late!"

Since Mr. Coles found the child, some months ago, she has attended the Cushman school pretty regularly. The father found to his astonishment that in the good city of Boston he had no right to send his child out upon the street in school hours. Confirmed truancy, like confirmed drunkenness, is a culpable of-

fence; and, according to Boston laws, children that cannot be kept in school are sent "down to the Island" for terms of six months to two years, according to the degree of offence.

Little Katrina, however, is very glad to go to school; indeed, it is the exception when the children themselves rebel against the law.

"After school in the afternoon," says our little violinist, "I generally go out on the street and play until eight and nine o'clock in the evening. Sometimes I go alone up on Beacon Street; I like to sing and play there. Once some bad boys made fun of me, but I spoke just as cross as I could to them, and when they didn't mind, I called a policeman!"

She is a funny little thing — this Katrina! I think Topsy must have looked somewhat like her, only Katrina has an olive skin and Topsy's was jet black.

Come with me, little WIDE-AWAKE readers, and I will show you another picture.

Isn't it a funny-looking court, — so narrow you can touch both walls as you pass between them! And isn't this an odd-looking building? Why, it is so crowded and wedged in it makes one think of an old tooth that ought to be pulled to make room for new ones! Up a few steps, down a few more, and we

come to a little room that seems more like a den than anything else. Oh! it is so low and dark and damp.

There are two windows, to be sure, in it, but they are so little and so dusty that hardly a bit of light comes through.

At one an old man with grey hair, but keen black eyes, sits busily at work. It is a shoe-last that he has in his hand, and under the table is any quantity of leather clippings.

Shoe-making is his trade, but music is his delight; and close beside the table is his harp — such a large one that it almost touches the low ceiling! On the wall hang two violins, and a third rests upon the window sill.

Pictures of all sizes, and all colors too, are tacked helter-skelter between the windows and over the chimney-piece, while just above the door hangs an old horse-shoe — for luck, you know!

Pasquale is not at home — that we can see for ourselves — but the old father would like to explain why.

He cannot understand our English, and we are equally ignorant of his rapid Italian; but — and isn't it funny and foolish? — we all begin to talk louder and louder, as if by this means we may at last come to make each other understand! Finally, with a laugh, we give it up; but the old man takes the covering off

his harp, tunes the really fine instrument, and gives us some excellent music.

The violins belong to Pasquale, and his father is evidently very proud of his little son, for nearly every thing he tries to tell us has Pasquale's name in it.

Close by the violin, on the window, is a large toy-boat very nicely made and rigged. The old man nods his head with delight when we notice it. Yes, it is Pasquale's work, no doubt, for he is a very intelligent boy. But what a pity he is not at home to-day! However, we may find him on the street, and we are very glad to have seen just where and how he lives.

Pasquale Carvalo! That is his name; and if a black-eyed, black-haired boy of twelve, with a fine, earnest face, happens to come to your window with his violin, give him a few pennies, and some kind words too, for Pasquale needs them all. He is doing wonderfully well in his studies at school, and if right influences are only thrown about him, I think he will make a fine man.

And here is our little accordeon boy, Auguste by name.

I first met him in a horse-car, and his little brother was with him that day. The two boys had been out to Brookline, they said, and had made fifty cents since they left home.

AUGUSTE.

Many children in our city learn to play the accordeon; for it is much easier to learn, and the instrument is far cheaper than the violin. Sometimes you hear it well played, and then the instrument sounds very sweetly; but I remember two little girls, ragged, untidy children they were, who used to make most horrible discords upon them. And then when they tried to sing, too — why! everybody in the neighborhood ran to their windows and shut them down with a bang! The children had mistaken their calling, like so many other people in this big world of ours.

But there is one little boy — I have not seen him a lady was telling me about him — who has such a wonderful voice that crowds always gather when he begins to sing.

His father carries a hand-organ, and I think the little fellow plays sometimes on a tambourine. But it is the rare singing of those beautiful Italian airs that brings the crowds and the coppers!

It is not often you see children, or women either, with hand-organs — the instrument is too heavy to take about; but I remember a woman once came into our street with a hand-organ fastened to a wheel-barrow, and in the other half of this strange turn-out was a basket, and in the basket a real live baby — just think of that! And just think of being lulled to sleep

by "Captain Jinks" and "Molly Darling" ground into one's very ears! But this strange baby seems to enjoy it — don't you think she will be a musical wonder if she ever lives to grow up?

But the monkeys — I haven't told you a word about them, and they are most important personages among our street musicians.

Why, yes, indeed! don't they always draw the biggest crowds and haven't I seen them playing on tamborines and fiddles just like little men for all the world?

There was one, I remember, dressed just like a soldier in bright scarlet uniform. He had a sword at his side and a rifle on his shoulder, — yes, and he knew how to use them too! Of course he danced, turned somersets, made bows to those who had anything to give him, and snapped his great white teeth if anybody scolded him.

Then I remember seeing another that was taking real comfort "in his own house." It was a curious little room where a number of hand-organ men had congregated; and while the master was taking his lunch, Mr. Monkey was taking his ease, now resting upon his haunches, now eating with all his might, and running about like a school-boy let loose from study.

Oh, dear! what a strange, gypsey-sort of life these street-musicians have to follow! Even the little boot-

blacks look down upon them with pity, and are ashamed to own the fact if they have ever been in the business themselves.

It may do very well for monkeys, but I heartily wish there was not a child in our city who had to earn a living in this wretched, beggarly way. Will the good day ever come, I wonder, when street musicians will just be an interesting matter of history?

THE BALLOON VENDERS.

RED, white and blue! how they sway in the breeze, and how they glisten in the sunlight!

Pedro holds them high up, that every one who passes may see how bright and pretty they are.

He is standing on the Common, just at the end of the long flag-stone walk that makes a diagonal cut to Boylston Street and Park Square.

It is one of the very best places to sell his balloons; for, no matter what time of day it is, there always seems to be a moving crowd just here. Sometimes there is a long procession to and from the Providence depot; and then a great many people who live on Columbus Avenue, Boylston Street, and the Back Bay, find this particular flag-stone walk the nearest as well as the pleasantest way "down town."

Yes, indeed! Pedro had a good eye for business when he chose his stand right here.

"Only ten cents apiece!"

Grave Papa Randolph has just come from his law-office, and is in a brown study over some puzzling "case in court," as he hurries on to catch the train.

But Pedro has somehow managed to catch his eye and ear.

The children! — why! he had nearly forgotten them! But here are these bright balloons — would it be possible to carry them home?

Pedro seems to read his thoughts, for, taking out of his coat pocket a little flat bag with a bright magenta tube at one end he puts it to his mouth; and in a few seconds holds up to the light the pretty red balloon he has blown up so quickly from what seemed but a bit of brown rubber.

Another second — the big, round ball goes off with a sharp whistle, and nothing is left in Pedro's sunburnt hand, but a mass of wrinkled gutta percha!

The grave lawyer looks on with interest — he likes to sift matters to the bottom — and Pedro explains how the balloons already inflated that he holds up on the string are filled with hydrogen gas, but are not a bit better or stronger than those blown up with the breath.

"Only, to be sure, the hydrogen gas does make them a little lighter," adds Pedro who is anxious to tell the whole truth.

Papa Randolph, however, is satisfied with these convenient little empty bags that can be blown up with the breath, and stops to buy a white one for Maud, a blue one for Tom, and a red one for Harry; and while he is tucking them into his pocket a lady—somebody's dear mamma, I know, — is asking Pedro for a couple more.

Trade is brisk to-day, and Pedro will have to get a new stock of balloons by afternoon. Would you like to know just where he goes to buy them, and wouldn't you like to see how the pretty little things are made?

Let us follow him as he saunters down Boylston Street. There! he is just turning into Carver Street, and, if we hurry a bit, we can catch up with him.

Dear me! what a funny little doorway it is where Pedro says we must stop. I'm going to write down the odd sign just over the entrance, for it is a genuine curiosity in the way of spelling and punctuation. Here it is:

ESTOUP NOEL & CO.
FRENCH CUTLERY
REPAIERD, AT SHORT, NOTICE, RAZARS
put in order.
ALSO BALOON MAKER.

The sign is evidently home made, and is painted in red and black letters upon a white ground, so that it stands out in bold relief. The door, or rather gate, is very low and very narrow — we will let Pedro go first, and then follow, one by one.

"Bow bow-wow!" Why! what is this? A big, black Newfoundland, sure enough, and I do believe Pedro trod upon his toes, for the dog and the kennel together quite fill up the narrow passage way! There is plenty of room overhead, though, way up to the sky! For it is an open court, and looking in between the old, broken-down, picturesque buildings I could easily imagine myself in some far away city of the East.

"MADE A REPAIERT."

These are the mysterious words we read over the inner door which is half way open. A stout, good-natured looking Frenchman answers our knock, and we step down into a dark little basement room that smells very strong of rubber and dyes.

There is a nicely polished cooking stove that fills up a goodly portion of the room, and all sorts of "kitchen furniture" seem in the act of "changing places." Estoup can talk English, and understands it, too; but he jabbers French a great deal faster!

Yes, he has plenty of balloons already made, but the man who makes them for him is out of town to-day. Estoup, however, is very obliging. He will tell us just how the work is done, and some day, perhaps, we can come in again.

Here are the sheets of rubber — a peculiar kind of gutta percha that Estoup says cannot be bought in this country.

"Way over England — come," he explains, and when we take the rubber in our hands, its tint and its firm, close texture is quite different, we find, from ordinary rubber.

Then Estoup takes up a forlorn looking little "wab" of nondescript color, puts it to his lips, and with every puff of breath we can see it grow bigger and bluer.

"Him four parts — see!" and, like a miniature globe quartered in regular divisions, we notice how neatly and firmly the four parts of the little balloon have been cemented together.

Then, Estoup brings out two big jars, such as chemists use, and shows us how the vitriol is poured upon the pieces of zinc, and a kind of gas formed to inflate the rubber.

"Dye all through — blue, red, white — no wash

off!" and Estoup puts them to his tongue that we may see for ourselves.

"Pictures, flags — paint-pot — bad, poison the children! These no harm — never!" he adds with many gestures. We nod assent, which brings another grimace of delight to Estoup's broad, good-natured face.

"But how about the whistles — do you make them too?"

"*Oui, oui*! make all — right here!"

Pedro buys a dozen of the balloons and pays seventy cents for them; so we know just how much profit he gets when he sells them on the Common.

"And do you have a great demand for the balloons?" we ask Estoup.

With just a bit of a consequential air, he shows us a large order he has lately had from California.

"Me makes twenty-five gross a week sometime — Fourth of July me no make them fast enough."

"But where is your little boy? Doesn't he help you?"

"Oh! *non*! *non*! — him way off — seminaire in France — me no want him to make balloons — me give him an 'educate.'"

Estoup fears we may not understand; and repeats his words with gestures innumerable.

With true fatherly pride, he talks about this little son who is to have such a fine "*educate;*" and we can't help wondering if the boy is making a good use of his opportunities.

Surely, he ought to study very hard, and grow up a comfort and honor to such a loving, devoted father!

"Please, sir, can I have a cent's worth of that rubber?"

It is a child's voice, and looking up we see a little girl standing in the door-way.

Estoup welcomes her with a smile, and gets the cent's worth of rubber with as much alacrity as if it were one of those "big orders."

You see he is every inch a Frenchman, and never forgets his manners! I don't wonder people like to trade with him, for to be always obliging and always polite — even in little things — is the mark of a true gentleman.

As far as the making of toy balloons is concerned, I believe Estoup & Co. to have the whole monopoly in Boston.

Doubtless many toy shops in the city — especially the larger establishments — send directly to New York or Paris for the ready-made article; but Estoup and his man "Friday" know the secret, and I think their little balloons are quite as well made as those that come from a greater distance.

PEDRO.

How ingenious all these French people are! Why, if it hadn't been for their busy brains, I don't believe we should have had any sort of balloons, at all!

Ever and ever so many years ago, there was an old Catholic priest, Father Lauretus Laurus by name, who said if any one would take the egg of a goose, blow out the inside, and fill it with morning dew, something very wonderful would happen.

But to see it best, you must put it out in the hot sun at the foot of a long ladder. Then, when the egg grew very hot, it would begin of its own accord to mount up the ladder — round by round! Of course, this was all a fancy of Father Lauretus' brain, but you see he had the right theory, after all, about the expansion of heated air.

It was a good many years after this, that Stephen and Joseph Montgolfier, two brothers who lived near Lyons, in France — actually made a little bag which they called "balloon" from the French word "*ballon*" meaning "little ball."

After a few experiments, just among themselves, they resolved to have a public exhibition in the large open square where everybody could see this wonderful little ball that was lighter than the air itself.

It was a lovely June morning in the year 1783, and a great crowd gathered in the square to see this first ascent. The balloon itself looked just like folds of

paper; but when a fire was kindled underneath, instead of burning up it began to rise higher and higher till at last it was out of sight! For ten minutes it hung suspended in the air, then floated gently down and landed in a vineyard — a mile and a half from the city.

Well, after this, the two brothers made a large bag, fastened a little basket to it, and into the basket they put a sheep, a cock, and a duck. These were the first living creatures that ever went "up in a balloon;" and they evidently enjoyed their funny ride in the air, for all three were bright and lively when the balloon came down to earth again. The cock's wing to be sure, was just a little lame, but that probably came about from his uneasy fluttering.

Now, certain courageous Frenchmen began to wonder if it wouldn't be possible for themselves to take an air-voyage in just the same way.

The wise and the cautious shook their heads and said it was a very fool-hardy, dangerous experiment; but Pilatre de Rozier, a young French naturalist, was determined to run the risk.

At last, he persuaded the Marquis d' Arlandes to go with him, and on the twenty-first of November, that very same year, (1783,) they made their first ascent.

Of course, this was a much larger balloon than any of the others, and I think the bag was made of silk, dipped into a solution of Indian-rubber. Then, instead of being filled with heated air like the Montgolfier balloons, it was inflated, if I remember rightly, with hydrogen gas.

It was a dull, cloudy day when the two men got into the little car that was fastened to this mysterious air bag. I don't wonder the Marquis was a little frightened when the cords that held the balloon to the ground were cut away, and up up, three thousand feet they rose — as if on the wings of some great bird!

There was a crowd watching them from the chateau gardens of Muette, where the balloon had been fastened; but Rozier and the Marquis soon lost sight of them. Six miles of space they traversed in twenty-five minutes, and when they were ready to come down the balloon was resting over the Boulevards.

O! so many questions as they had to answer when, safe and sound, they fairly reached the ground.

The curious people flocked around them, like as many magpies, and those who had croaked loudest

about the "wild goose scheme" were now ready to try the venture themselves.

Since that ascent, there have been many others far more wonderful, but not one of greater interest or importance; for this, you know, was the very first ascent that anyone had dared to make; and to do what nobody else has ever done before always takes a deal of noteworthy courage and enterprise.

But we have wandered away from Pedro, and his little toy balloons. He is back at his post on the Common now; and there is a little girl not far away from him, who is selling balloons too.

Really, I am afraid he will find her a dangerous "rival in trade."

Sometimes, you will see the little empty bags taken about in a basket.

There is a boy — or rather man, I have seen on Washington Street, who has a wooden box slung over his neck with a leather strap; and in the box he carries, among other articles, a new-fashioned kind of balloon that he sells at twenty-five cents apiece.

It is shaped and colored just like Pedro's, but I see there are two holes instead of one, in the empty rubber bag.

A little metal tube is thrust into the first hole, and into the second a sort of flute whistle made of some bright colored wood.

When I saw him, he was showing a young girl how to use it; first, he blew up the bag by means of the little metal tube, and then as the air began to escape he moved his fingers rapidly up and down the long piece of colored wood.

O dear, such an unearthly noise as it made! I suppose he called it "music," but it sounded more like an Indian war-whoop than anything else I could think of.

Perhaps "the boys" may enjoy this noisy toy, but I know the little girls like Pedro's balloons a great deal better.

Why, it is most as good as a kite, to have one of these light pretty balls that float so quietly high up in the air.

Sometimes they are fastened to a long stick that will easily bend without breaking; but a good, stout string answers every purpose if the balloon is well inflated.

It is a pretty sight to see the children at play with these bright toys on the Common and Public Gardens. In and out among the trees and shrubbery,

they look like colored lights when the sunshine falls upon them. But, woe to the unfortunate balloon that gets caught and torn in the branches! A hole as big as a pin's head is enough to burst the brilliant bubble; and no doubt it is a very good thing for the trade that these pretty delicate toys are, at best, but short-lived.

THE STREET PEDDLERS.

DID you ever think what the word "peddler," comes from? Sometimes we see it spelt "pedlar" and "pedler;" but the first way is the best—at least so the big dictionary says, and of course it knows better about such things than anybody else.

But it isn't quite sure, after all, what the word itself comes from. There is the German "bettler" that certainly sounds like "peddler;" but it means "beggar," and I don't like to apply that term to our busy little venders. "Pedester" is the Latin word for "going on foot," and perhaps it comes from that; but the Scotch term "pedder" is still nearer our word, and means one who carries a "ped" or basket. So, without questioning where the Scotch people got their word, I think we must have borrowed ours right from them, don't you?

Such a variety of little "pedders" and "peds" as we have in our Boston Streets! Down by Boylston Market there is — or was — a little fellow who peddled canes, and his "ped" was just an old tow bag. They were very modest walking sticks — only ten cents apiece — and as they were nicely polished I've no doubt he found a ready sale for them.

Then, here is a little girl, Mary Wilton by name, who peddles candy, and her "ped" is a bright tin tray. All her candy is "home-made," so you needn't be afraid to buy it. She and her brother Willy live just over Charlestown bridge, and what they earn by peddling fruit and candy goes a great way towards supporting the family.

A favorite place of Mary's is the right hand side of Court Street, as you leave Tremont Row. Sometimes you will find her sitting, with her little candy tray, in the doorway close by Pierce's grocery. I wish she could go to school and give up this gypsy sort of life; but the poor mother says she cannot get along without the money that Mary brings home at night. And so, unless the father gives up drinking, I am afraid our little girl will have to keep on with her peddling.

Down on State Street you may meet little Joseph Conio some day, He's a funny-looking child with

hair cropped close to his head and great ears that stand out on either side like big cockle shells.

When I saw him he was barefoot, and I presume you will find him so most of the year; for boots and shoes, except in the bleakest of weather, are among the "non-essentials" with these little street urchins. But when you look at Joseph's eyes you'll forget all about his dirt and rags. The long lashes and heavy arched brows frame in a pair of liquid black orbs that would do for one of Coreggio's cherubs. And a bright, honest face it is, that looks up into yours.

Joseph is a great favorite with all who know him; and he tells me he has one kind friend on State Street who, very often, pays him money but never will take a bit of his fruit and candy.

Joseph says he is twelve years old, but he looks a deal younger; and, when I say as much, the child gravely remarks:

"I s'pose I'm so little 'cause I work so hard. Why, sometimes I carry eighty pounds of paper all at once!"

This leads me to question him further and I find that, now-a-days, he thinks it more profitable to collect waste paper than to peddle fruit and candies.

"You see, they know me now at the offices there on State Street, and the gentlemen save the paper

for me. I carry down a big tow bag, fill it chuck full, and then take it round to the junk shops."

"And how much money do they give you for it?"

"A cent a pound; and I generally carry down a good many in my bag."

There are Frank, Poli, and a little sister whose name I've forgotten, — all younger than Joseph, — so whatever the little fellow can earn, whether by peddling or by picking up waste paper, is a great help at home.

Then, here is another street-peddler, little Stephen Magini by name, whose flaxen hair and blue eyes look as if they ought by right to belong to some genuine Saxon child. His own brother Augustus, however, has the usual Italian complexion; and I find that little Stevie is no less a child of the sunny South than he. For in Italy there are two types of nationality entirely distinct in their looks, and Stevie's father, who has very light hair and eyes, belongs to one, while his dark-eyed mother belongs to another.

Stevie is in school this morning — he comes two hours every day — and he stumbles through a spelling lesson with so much perseverance that I think he means to be a good scholar. But it is very funny to hear these Italian children try to spell English words. The e's are all a's and the i's e's to their ears; for at

home they never hear anything but Italian. Stevie, however, picks up a good many English words on the street, so he has a curious combination just now in his little brain.

If you meet a curly-headed, rosy-cheeked urchin on the street with fruit and candies to sell, who answers to the name of "Stevie," you may be pretty sure it is the very one I am telling you about. And, if you can, just stop and buy something out of his basket, for the money you give him will not be wasted. There are lots of little ones at home, and Stevie's mother finds it hard work to keep them all in food and clothing.

Here is a little girl, at the entrance of one of our big dry-goods stores, who has cocoa-nut-cakes to sell.

"Only eight cents a dozen!" she calls to the passers-by; but I do not think she finds a ready sale for them here. By and by, I shouldn't wonder if she wandered up Tremont Street, so as to be "on the spot" when the school bells ring for recess. There, among the school-children, her little cakes will be in great demand, and she will sell them at so much a-piece, which is more profitable than to sell them by the dozen.

Sometimes, at the entrance of public buildings, you will notice a placard printed in large letters, "No peddlers allowed here." Well, I suppose they are

oftentimes, a real nuisance; for I know some of these little street-peddlers are veritable "tramps," and often have a long story to tell that hasn't a word of truth in it.

I saw a little girl in the Post Office one day, hurrying along with a big basket on her arm that was covered over with an old blue cloth. She was munching away on a banana as if she wanted to get it out of sight as quickly as possible; and when I stepped up to buy something from her basket, she started suddenly, hung down her head, tucked the old cloth tightly over the fruit, and ran off — out of the Post Office and down Water Street as fast as her feet could carry her.

It was very evident that the child had stolen her bananas, but when I thought of the wretched home she had come from, where her theft had, doubtless, been praised as "smartness," I felt more like pitying than blaming her. Poor little girl! What will become of her if she is left to grow up under such wicked influences!

"Please, sir, won't you buy a cake of soap?"

It is a very pitiful voice, and the gentleman looks up to see before him a forlorn little specimen of humanity with two cakes of soap in her hand.

"No, child, I don't want any to-day,"

"But please, sir, do buy one cake, — mother's sick

A Street Peddler.

and father can't get any work. I haven't had a thing to eat since morning."

The gentleman keeps on writing, and the child keeps on whining.

"But I told you I didn't want any soap. Here! take this quarter and run off."

This is just what the child expected; those three cakes of soap, that she slid off the counter at the big store when no one was looking, she knows will last her all day, if she can only find the right persons to impose upon. For the child's story is all false; and had the gentleman just taken the trouble to inquire into the matter he would soon have found out the truth for himself. When he does know it he will probably say:

"They are all alike — a thieving, lying set, the whole of them!"

But this is not so. There are, even among the poorest and most ignorant, those who are honest, truthful, and willing to work; but we must learn to seek them out; must go into the "highways and hedges" ourselves, and then we shall know just who do need and are really worthy of our help.

Some time ago, a little German girl came to a friend's house on Beacon Street and rang the bell. She had a basket on her arm and in the basket were

trimming laces, pins, needles, sewing-silk and buttons.

Now, it happened the lady wanted some of these very articles, and so she told the servant to bring the little girl up to her room.

I don't think the child had ever seen so grand a house before. It seemed just like a dream to her, and she wondered if they were not stepping on real flowers as she followed the servant through the long halls and up the broad stairway. But if she had been "born to the purple," she couldn't have behaved in a prettier manner. Her neat dress, her gentle quiet ways, and her modest straight-forward replies to the lady's questions, showed, at once, how well she had been brought up. But my friend, although she was very much pleased and bought more of the little girl's wares than she actually wanted, was not satisfied until she had been to the child's home and *proved* the truth of her simple touching story. It was, as she thought, just as the little girl had said, and ever since then the poor struggling family have not wanted the help and encouragement of warm, true friends.

It is curious to notice what a variety of articles are peddled now-a-days upon the street. Here is a boy with sponges, another with tooth-picks, and still another with the "little Harry lamps." In one doorway stands a keen-eyed Jew with neck-ties and scarf-

pins to sell; in another, a man with rubber balls and funny toy spiders on an elastic string.

Here are the new-fashioned crimping pins — "just a few more left, ladies!" — and here are the "roly-poly dolls," and the reins with jingling bells. Tissue paper of all colors, plaster-paris images, books, chromos, imitation bronzes, eye-glasses, jewelry, oil paintings (so-called), and even live puppies, you will see offered for sale on our Boston streets. At the holiday season, why it actually seems as if all the stores were turning themselves inside out.

But the indefatigable peddlers do not stop here. In the depots, at the wharves, on the cars, anywhere and everywhere they are not actually forbidden and there is any possibility of selling their wares, you will be sure to find them.

Well! it is certainly better than begging, and in these days when it is so hard to get any kind of work it is oftentimes the only way that many have of earning a livelihood.

I know of a man whose helpless family is dependent upon charity, just because he is too proud to do menial work or anything like peddling. One of his children is a little invalid, and if it were not for kind friends who send the child many necessaries as well as delicacies I don't know how the family would get

along. They live in a tenement house down by one of our large depots, and people coming into town have often noticed the pale sweet face at the window.

One day, somebody threw a flower into the little girl's hands. She was so delighted that the next day they brought her some more; and then others began to bring her fruit and toys and all sorts of pretty things. Finally they proposed that she should have a little basket which she could draw up and down from her window with a cord. And ever since then these kind friends who come in on the cars have kept the basket filled with all sorts of "goodies."

It is one of the few bright spots in poor little Annie's life, and I wish you could see her eyes sparkle as she draws up the mysterious basket. I don't know as we can class her among the little peddlers, but I couldn't lay down my pen till I had told you about her curious little "ped."

THE CHESTNUT ROASTERS.

HOW good the smoking chestnuts smell, as we turn the corner! Yes, this very east wind that blows little Katie "almost to pieces" is truly the best advertisement in the world for her great brown nuts.

Just see how nicely they are roasted. She has learned the secret of turning them at the right moment — when they snap, you know — and it is very seldom you will find a burnt one in the whole lot.

Some of the nuts she keeps in a little pile at one side of her tray, for a customer may come and call for some raw ones; but almost everybody likes the roasted nuts better, and so she reserves only a few in the raw state.

This little "roaster" of Katie's is an ingenious

thing in its way. It looks like a miniature stove, has a grate above, and a sort of oven beneath that holds the charcoal. Sometimes, in the short afternoons when she stays out after dark, she fastens a torch to the roaster; and very picturesque the little stand looks, and the little vender, too, in the flickering, red light.

The smaller chestnuts were gathered by Katie's father and brothers, who walked a long distance to find them.

I wonder how many of my Wide Awake readers know what it is to go chestnutting.

Suppose, this bright afternoon, we try the fun ourselves. Up on the hill-side, where it is warm and dry, we shall find the best trees; and long before we reach them, the rich, russet leaves among the evergreens and the oaks will point out the way, like so many lighted candles.

How still the woods are! All the birds have flown, excepting the little pewit and the big black crow; for it is a long journey South, and the bob-o-links, the thrushes, and the finches, started weeks ago. Now and then a dead leaf drops to the ground with a crisp, rustling sound; and a moment ago I saw a red squirrel dart across the path. There he is coming back again now with his cheeks full of nuts.

And here is his mate, just peeping out of their home in the old hollow tree Dear me, if we only had teeth like the squirrels and could climb as fast as they, how easy it would be to gather our nuts. But here we are, right under the beautiful trees, and just see what a soft, dainty carpet the falling leaves have made.

Brown and green and gold — what prettier combination of colors could we have? And here are tall straight trunks for pillars, and a bit of blue sky for our ceiling. Truly we are treading a king's palace to-day.

But what is the matter with Robbie? There he stands, shaking his little sun-burnt fingers, and crying, alternately.

O, I see now what it is. He has picked off the tree — the foolish boy — a couple of those great, prickly, "shut-up" burrs, and is trying to open them himself. Ah, little Robbie, you must not be in such a hurry; Jack Frost can do that work a great deal better than you, and these tight burrs were getting all ready for his magic touch to-night. You might as well throw them away at once; for, even if you manage to split open the burrs, the nuts inside will be green and unfit to eat.

Just see what Percy has picked up on the ground.

A dozen big ripe nuts that dropped off their ugly coverings long ago; and Beth holds in her hand a wide-open burr, with three nuts all cosily packed together inside, like little brown birds in their soft warm nest. For the inside of the burr, you see, is just as delicate and silky as the outside is rough and prickly. Isn't it wonderful, how much care is taken to protect and ripen one little nut?

Think of those beautiful spring days when the birds and the blossoms unfolded; when April showers and bright May sunshine bathed and kissed the long fragrant tassels till, one by one, they flew away, and left in their places tiny green balls on the old, weather-beaten tree.

You could scarcely see them at first, these wee little creatures — they were so very small and weak; but, day by day, the warm sun nourished them, and summer winds tenderly rocked them, till, by and by — all over the tree — these funny porcupine-looking burrs began to peer out in the sauciest manner possible. It seemed as if they knew how much time and care it had taken to make them, and what treasures they held inside; for tighter and tighter they clung to the tree, and no rude winds or rains could even peep in at their close-barred doors. It was no admittance to everybody till the little nuts inside

were fully grown and fairly ripe. Then the poor old burrs didn't care — Jack Frost and the cold north winds and the driving storms might come and break open the doors whenever they pleased — the big brown nuts were now able to take care of themselves, and as for the burrs, why, they were so tired out that they just longed to lie down on the dead leaves, and go quietly to sleep.

Over the sea, in Gloucestershire, England, is an old, old chestnut tree that has given birth to more than a thousand generations of nuts. In King John's time it was known as a boundary mark; and I doubt if there is another chestnut tree in all the world that is quite so old as this.

But, on Mt. Etna, there is a very wonderful one that measures nearly two hundred feet in circumference. It is hard to imagine a tree so large as this, but just take a bit of string some day and put it around the biggest tree you can find; then you will understand better how many trees of ordinary size it would take to make one that would measure two hundred feet around, like this one up on Mt. Etna. One part of the trunk is hollow, and sometimes whole flocks of sheep with their shepherds get inside for protection from the sun or rain.

Once upon a time, Joanna of Arragon, with a hun-

dred horsemen, all from the noble families of Catania, rode up the mountain side; and just as the royal party reached this wonderful tree, there came up a sudden and very violent storm.

At first, they hardly knew what to do, but the big tree threw out its great arms so invitingly that they drove in under the branches, and, sure enough, there was plenty of room for them all. Ever after that, the tree was called the "Hundred-Horse Chestnut."

These European trees are not very different from ours, but the nut that grows upon them is much larger. The best kind for eating, the French call *marrows;* and all these big nuts that Katie has in her "roaster," have come from over the seas. She charges twenty-five cents a pint for these — just double what she does for the natives, — for she had to pay a good price for them, herself; and each one of the foreign nuts is equal to a couple of ours.

Little Augustus Magini tells me that when they lived in Genoa he used to go out into the chestnut groves about the city and gather the nuts, just as we have been doing to-day.

"We'd shake the trees, and the big ripe burrs would tumble down," he says.

"But did you never have any frost there?

"P'raps, but it wasn't cold like as it is here. Sometimes, though, we did have a little snow."

LITTLE KATIE.

Just think of snow in sunny Italy; but Genoa, you know, is farther north than Florence and Naples.

"And they used to grind up the nuts and make flour out of 'em" adds Augustus.

"And what did they do with the flour — make bread and cakes out of it?"

Augustus is a little doubtful — he was a very little fellow when they left Italy, and he doesn't quite remember. But we know that puddings cakes, bread, and soup-thickening are made from this kind of chestnut flour, or rather meal; and all throughout the southern portions of Europe, it forms a staple article of food among the poor.

Sometimes, the chestnuts are simply boiled or roasted, and eaten with milk; but in whatever form they are taken, the nuts contain a deal of nutriment, and I don't know how the working classes could get along without them. For meat costs a deal, and chestnuts there, are very plenty and very cheap.

Beside the flour, there is a kind of crumb like sugar made from the nut that is quite good for many purposes; and all throughout Spain, Italy, Switzerland and Germany, the wood of the sweet chestnut is much valued by cabinet makers and coopers.

On the banks of the beautiful Rhine, along the slopes of the Jura, the Pyrenees and the Alps, you

will find the chestnut tree; and in England, too, for there it is grown for coppice-wood and for building purposes, as well as for its fruit.

The wood of the chestnut is very much like oak, both in color and texture; and when it is well seasoned, as in old buildings, it is very difficult to tell the two apart. Some say that the roof of Westminster Abbey is really made of chestnut, although it looks exactly like oak, and is usually described as such.

In our own country, too, we find the native chestnut wood is often used for hard finish in buildings, and for furniture. Sometimes, it is put with black walnut, and then the contrast of light straw with dark brown is very effective.

During the latter part of the last century, Thomas Jefferson tried to introduce the European chestnut into Virginia, but I do not think it has taken very kindly to our soil. We have plenty of horse chestnuts, but these trees are altogether different from the chestnut whose fruit is fit to eat, and resembles the horse chestnut only in size. The tree itself, is so large and so beautiful both in its form and foliage, I don't wonder Salvator Rosa delighted to bring it, as often as possible, into his paintings.

But here is little Katie, waiting to give us our pint of chestnuts and our change.

We have wandered "over the seas and far away," but we shall eat our chestnuts with all the better relish, for that. Chestnut vending, during the season, is quite the fashion here in Boston; and on the Common you will find another little girl, Adeline Barr by name, who sells chestnuts with her cakes and fruits and candies.

Her father is a Greek, she tells me, and he is usually at the stand himself; but when I saw little Adeline, she was "keeping shop" all by herself; and I couldn't help wondering that so tiny a child should be left to take the entire charge.

When the chestnuts first come, they seem to mark, as the strawberries do, a decided change of season.

We can't help calling it "summer" — no matter how early it may be — whenever the great red berries make their appearance; and so to-day we say, "Autumn and old Jack Frost have surely come, for don't you see the chestnuts are all ripe, and in the market?"

THE TELEGRAPH BOYS.

THERE are about one hundred and seventy-five boys in all, that flit about our Boston streets with these magic telegrams. And a busier set of little fellows — except it be the cash boys — I don't believe you will find in the whole city.

The "Western Union" Office, including all its branches, employs about one hundred and fifty boys; and the Main Office on State Street has seventy-five of the whole number.

I wonder if you have ever noticed their uniform. It is a dark navy blue, and the short coat has upon each shoulder a three-cornered piece of red; while the pockets, if I remember rightly, and the pantaloons, too, are corded with the same color.

The cap has a decided military air; and the raised

letters, "WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH," are printed in heavy black upon a white band.

These uniforms are all made in New York, and the boys each buy them of the Company — paying fifteen dollars for the suit.

No boy is allowed to have the position unless he wears the uniform; and when the regulation was first put in force (a few years ago) it created a good deal of ill-feeling.

The boys thought it unjust that they should be compelled to spend so large a part of their earnings in this way; but after a little they began to see how much better it was to have an "official" suit. It gave a certain dignity to their work, and after all the price was just about the same as they would have to pay for any good suit of clothing.

So I think there is not a word of complaint now-a days about the "regulation."

The "District Telegraph" boys have a uniform, too, which is very like the "Western Union;" but if you notice closely you will see that, instead of the three-cornered piece on their shoulders, they have a sort of clover leaf made of scarlet cord. Then the letters upon their caps are just the reverse in color; for the words, "District Telegraph," are printed in raised *white* letters on a *black* band.

The boys employed by the "Atlantic and Pacific Telegraph Company" have gray uniforms, something like the letter carriers; but we do not often see them on the street for the whole force numbers now only about seventeen boys.

So much for round figures and uniforms — now a word about the boys themselves. Some of the little fellows are seemingly not more than twelve years old, but most of them are between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. Nearly every one is earning his own living, and many of them have others depending upon their earnings.

The "District Telegraph" boys are paid three and four dollars a week by the Company according to the amount of work they do; while the "Western Union" boys receive so much for the delivery of each message. I believe the lowest price paid is two and a half cents, and the highest twenty-five.

The "Union" boys at the Main Office are arranged in three divisions each numbering twenty-five boys. By this means the day and night work are very evenly divided.

The boy who through the week is kept up latest goes by the name of the "Good-night boy."

Hither and thither all through the city, and at all hours of the day and night, the little fellows hurry

along with their dispatches. And just think what important messages they carry in those great yellow envelopes!

Here is a "Western Union" cap dodging in and out among the crowds on Washington and Tremont streets. He is hurrying on as fast as he can, for somebody's darling lies just at the point of death, and the few words he carries are fraught with terrible import for somebody.

While he is on his way, another boy is carrying a message of good news — the safe arrival of some dear friend in a foreign port; and here is another with a mysterious urgent request that only the receiver can understand.

The rise and the fall of gold, the fluctuations of the market, weather records, war news, political nominations, the latest word from Congress — all matters, whether of public or private interest, which flash across the wires are recorded at the various Offices and delivered by these swift, trusty little messengers in an incredibly short space of time.

As I stood waiting in the Main Office, and read upon the walls, "Messages sent at all hours to all parts of the world," I couldn't help contrasting the world of to-day with the world of "a hundred years ago." Then telegraphing seemed but an idle dream, too wonderful to be ever realized.

Perhaps you have read how at first they tried for each message as many wires as there are letters of the alphabet; and when, in 1816, Ronalds thought a single wire would do, he was told by the British government that "telegraphs of any kind are now wholly unnecessary, and no other than the one now in use will be adopted."

Just think what a remark that was for enlightened England to make.

But she couldn't stop the busy brains from thinking and wondering and planning.

Dyar, Ampere, Baron Schilling, Moncke and Cooke, one after the other, kept the ball of inquiry and experiment constantly in motion; and each added some new suggestion to the growing idea of a practical system of telegraphing. At last, in 1835, the first actual electric telegraph was constructed in England from Paddington to Drayton, a distance of thirteen miles. There were five needles connected with it, and the six wires, wound round with hemp, were laid in pipes along the surface of the ground.

Four years later, a certain Dr. O'Shaughnessy built at Calcutta the first over-ground line of iron wire, which he drew over bamboo poles.

But it remained for our own countryman, Samuel F. B. Morse, to perfect the great discovery; and it

A Telegraph Boy.

was during his voyage home from France in 1832 that he first conceived the idea of making signs at a distance, by means of a pencil moved by an electric magnet. The model he formed had but one conducting medium, and the paper was moved under the pencil by clock work. This he made in 1835, but it was not till 1844 that the first public telegraph was laid in our country. It extended from Washington to Baltimore, a distance, as you remember, of forty miles. Since then, there has been no end to the lines of telegraphing that have been laid all over our country from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast; and now, as you know, the great ocean itself is spanned by the same magic wire; for Cyrus Field conquered every difficulty and showed us how even the deep waters could be made a connecting medium.

Of course my WIDE AWAKE readers know how the messages travel over the wires; but perhaps they do not quite understand what the District Telegraph means; there are only four offices in Boston — one at the South End Post Office, one at the State House, another on Brimmer Street, and the fourth at the Brunswick Hotel. It was at this latter office that I saw how the system worked.

There are ten boys employed here, and they are on duty ten hours each day. Of this number, two are

up all night, and the ten take turns in sharing this night work. Their uniform I described as being very similar though quite distinct from the Western Union boys; and I might have added that it is a good deal fresher-looking, for the "District" boys have not been so long in "office."

At the Brunswick, there are three circuits of the District Telegraph; and as the name implies the lines are all confined to city limits. The various wires in the office are connected with private houses and are for the especial convenience of those who may desire immediate attendance.

A strip of paper passes under the electric needle, and each of the three circuits has a separate instrument. While I was there a call came from one of the circuits, so I had the satisfaction of seeing just how the whole thing was managed.

When the needle moves a bell rings — once, if it is just an errand boy that is wanted; twice, if a policeman is called; and three times if any one desires a hack to be sent to his residence. Well, this time the bell rang twice, very violently, too, — and the clerk in charge quickly lifted up the paper under the needle, read the number of dots pricked upon it — opened a little drawer just above that had the same number printed upon it, found in the drawer the gentleman's

address; and, in far less time than I can possibly write it down, it was all done and the policeman running fast to relieve the frightened household.

The truth was that in one of those pretty brown stone fronts on the Back Bay there was just then, even while I sat there, a great commotion.

It seems hardly possible that anything of the kind could occur in such a locality of the city; but we must remember that even in the most elegant of mansions there must always be a "down-stairs" as well as an "up stairs."

Now a certain Maria in one of these lower domains, had been cook and queen for so many years that nobody thought of disputing her rights. She could make the whitest of bread, the puffiest of pastry, the lightest, most mouth-melting of cakes — indeed, there seemed to be nothing in all Miss Parloa's art to which this fat Maria was not equal. But alas! she had one great failing — and the little black bottle on the corner shelf in the cupboard told the whole story.

Well, on this particular day that I began to tell you about, the children up in the nursery heard a great outcry from the basement.

Harry was the boldest of the little trio, and scampered down stairs to see what was the matter; but soon, with all the color out his rosy cheeks, he came

running back — crying at the top of his lungs. The little fellow was terribly frightened, but managed to tell his mamma that there was a big rough man in the kitchen, that Maria had thrown a plate at him, and that her face was just as red as red could be!

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed nurse; "it is that horrid son of hers and they are having a regular drunken quarrel down there— dear, I shouldn't wonder if they killed each other! dear, what shall we do?"

Nobody dared go down and separate them, but suddenly mamma thought of the District Telegraph that had been brought to the house only a few days before.

"Why, we can send right away for a policeman — I never thought we should need our telegraph for this!"

A little click of the magnetic wire, twice repeated,— an answering "click click" at the office, — and then a third "click, click" at the Police Station (for there are wires from each District Telegraph Office to the various Fire Departments, Hack Stands and Police Stations in the city); and then, before Harry was half through his crying, the policeman stood at the door.

The boys tell me that, of the four uses made of the District Telegraphing, the call for messengers to run errands comes the most frequently; then the call for

hacks; while the alarm of fire is about as frequent as the double click for policemen.

At the Office at Hotel Brunswick, many of the boys understand how to manage the telegraph battery themselves; and one little fellow who has been there quite a long time receives an extra dollar a week for work done in the Office.

At the State House Office thirty "District" boys are employed; at the South End Post Office ten; and at the Brimmer Street Office only three are needed.

It is about four years since the system of this District telegraphing was put into working order; and a year ago last August a *Telephone* Despatch Company was formed. The three offices of this latter Company are on Washington Street, Charles Street, and under Hotel Berkeley.

Only sixteen boys are as yet employed in all the telephone offices combined; but as the business increases the number needed will of course be larger.

Their uniform is hardly distinguishable from the "District" boys except by the caps which have "Tell ephone Despatch Co." in gilt letters upon the black band.

The different circuits go to private houses in the city, and the principal advantage the telephone system has over telegraphy is that spoken words travel even faster than those electrically written.

SUGAR PLUMS. Poems by ELLA FARMAN. Pictures by Miss C. A. Northam. Price, $1 00. D. Lothrop & Co., Boston.

This collection of sweets, which the critics say is the best verse-book published since "Lilliput Levee," will probably prove to be one of the most popular Christmas-Tree books of the season. The poems are written from a child's own point-of-view, and some of them, like "Learning to Count," "Baby's Frights," "Pinkie-Winkie-Posie-Bell," will be perennial favorites in the nursery. While the book is sure to captivate the baby-memory, we will whisper to the mothers that there is not an idle "jingle" in the volume, but that every verse will subtly give a refining and shaping touch to the little child-soul. The book is attractively bound, handsomely illustrated, and ought to be found in every Christmas Stocking in the land.

Ask your Bookseller for it.

POEMS IN COMPANY WITH CHILDREN.—By MRS. S. M. B. PIATT. Illustrated. Price, $1 50. D. Lothrop & Co., Boston.

A mother's book—one of those dainty, treasured volumes of poetry which naturally find a resting-place in the mother's work-basket, always at hand, to be taken up in a tender moment. It also contains many poems to be read aloud in the twilight hour when the children gather around mother's knee. Of its literary excellence it is needless to speak as Mrs. Piatt stands at the head of American women poets.

OUT OF DARKNESS INTO LIGHT. By Mary A. Lathbury. With eight masterly character drawings, full page, with poems and exquisite vignettes. Fine binding. Quarto. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price, $3.00.

We have no hesitation in pronouncing this one of the most attractive presentation books which has been brought out in this city for many seasons. Elegantly bound and superbly illustrated, displaying the utmost art of artist and printer, its literary merit is of the highest order. The author, Miss Mary A. Lathbury, is both artist and poet. In the several poems which make up the book she traces the gradual coming out from the thick darkness of doubt and unbelief into the full broad day of faith and religious trust. They are sweetly and delicately written, and will appeal to many hearts whose experiences have been similar. The drawings with which Miss Lathbury accompanies her poems express in form what her pen has done in words. So full of meaning has she made them that they almost alone tell the story of the doubt, the struggle, the anguish and the conviction which so many have experienced in their attempts to attain to a higher spiritual life. The vignettes are no less artistic and expressive, each one being emblematic of some sentiment contained in the poem to which it belongs. To those who celebrate Christmas as a religious festival as well as to those who are of a thoughtful turn of mind, the volume will have a peculiar value. Most holiday volumes serve only for the season in which they appear, but the one before us possesses those peculiar elements which make it a standard work, unaffected by the lapse of time or seasons.

THE CHILDREN'S ALMANAC. FOR 1879-80-81-82-83. Edited By Ella Farman. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co.

This unique little volume, which for beauty and intrinsic value will compare with many of the high-priced annuals, contains peculiar attractions which will render it one of the best selling books of the season. The calendar — which reaches over five years — gives it a value which the ordinary almanac does not possess. Each month is represented by an original poem from the pen of a distinguished American author, the list of contributors numbering such names as Longfellow, Whittier, Aldrich, Celia Thaxter, Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney, Edgar Fawcett, and others. Accompanying these poems are twelve exquisite drawings on wood by Miss Humphrey, and four beautiful chromo-lithographs by Miss Lathbury. As if these attractions were not enough, the editor has prepared twelve pages of birthday mottoes from the poets, making a single line motto for every day in the year. Blank memoranda leaves are inserted for the benefit of those who wish to put down notes or make record of daily occurrences. Two editions are issued, — one in plain cloth, at 50 cents, and the other with silver-and-gold cover gilt edges, at $1.00.

AMY AND MARION'S VOYAGE AROUND THE WORLD. By Sarah B. Adams. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. 16mo. 390 pages $1.25.

This handsome volume, from the pen of the daughter of a distinguished Boston clergyman, is the record of a trip around the world in an East India merchantman, made a year or two since by two young ladies, one of whom was the author. Sailing from Boston, the first land touched was San Francisco. From there, after a brief stay, the voyagers proceeded to Honolulu, thence to the Chinese coast, where the cities of Hong Kong, Canton, Singapore, Amoy, Shanghai and Macao were visited in turn. The ship then sailed for the Philippine Islands; and at Manila, one of the loveliest and most picturesque cities of the Southern Pacific, two or three happy weeks were spent. From that port the homeward course was taken, the vessel doubling the Cape of Good Hope and sailing up the African coast. The story of the voyage is gracefully and vividly told. The jolly times on shipboard; the sights seen from deck; rough weather experiences; the excursions made at the various stopping places, and the adventures and misadventures attendant upon them; the scenery, customs of the different people visited, together with innumerable incidents of the trip, are described with a freshness and vigor which render every page of the book thoroughly enjoyable. The illustrations which accompany the text are made doubly interesting from the fact that they are engraved from photographs procured on the spot and brought home by the author.

JESUS, LOVER OF MY SOUL. Exquisitely illustrated. An elegant small Quarto gift-book. Gilt edges. A companion volume to "The Ninety and Nine." Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price, $1.00.

There is no more beautiful hymn in the English language than the one which furnishes the title of this exquisite little volume. Many readers will remember the affecting story of the wreck, where one of the lady passengers, cut off from all hope of escape, clinging to a rock from which every wave threatened to tear her hold, poured out her soul in these sweet words of trust. The artist, Mr. Robert Lewis, has seized upon this incident as the subject of one of his most effective drawings. The entire series of illustrations are exceedingly fine, the work of Mr. Lewis as draughtsman having been ably supplemented by that of Mr. Dana as the engraver. The volume forms a beautiful presentation book, and though equally attractive with the three and five dollar volumes which fill the counters of our bookstores, is sold at the nominal price of one dollar. The interest of the work is larely added to by an eloquent preface from the pen of the Rev. W. B. Wright, of the Berkeley Street, Church.

LITTLE MISS MISCHIEF AND HER HAPPY THOUGHTS. Adapted from the French of P. J. Stahl by Ella Farman. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price, 75 cts.

In a series of capitally drawn sketches the artist tells the story (assisted by the author) of a mischievous little girl who undertook while her mother was confined to her room by illness, to set things to rights generally about the house. She paints mustaches on a portrait which her artist papa has just finished; tries to color the lap-dog's face black with ink and spills it over herself and the floor; attempts to wash her papa's gray hat with the inky sponge; breaks the mantel clock in trying to wind it; pours boiling water into the globe of gold fish to make them more comfortable; cuts off the corners of her mamma's nice shawl so it will not drag in the street, and does a variety of other things which no one but an idle and inquisitive little girl would ever think of doing. The book is printed on fine paper, with double line border about every page.

LITTLE MISS MUSLIN. HER FORTUNES AND MISFORTUNES. By John Brownjohn. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. 50 cts.

Everybody has read and laughed over the adventures of Miltiades Peterkin Paul, which were brought out in a tasteful quarto volume last holiday season. Miltiades, it appears, had a cousin, a charming young lady of six or seven, who, although city born and bred, possessed certain peculiarities which rendered their companionship congenial. Miss Muslin, for that was her name, was continually doing something to get herself or some one else into a scrape. Her experiences after a time were varied by a visit to Miltiades in the country. The troubles they get themselves into and what was said and done about them are told in detail by the author in the same offhand, humorous style in which the adventures of Miltiades were chronicled. The drawings are from the pencil of Livingston Hopkins, one of the best American caricaturists. The volume is got up as a companion to the book of last year.

MUSIC FOR OUR DARLINGS. Edited by Dr. Eben Tourjee Fully Illustrated. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price, $1.25.

Hundreds of young readers will remember the beautiful book issued last year called *Poems for Our Darlings*. It proved so successful that this season the Messrs. Lothrop have brought out a companion volume called *Music for Our Darlings*, containing nearly forty favorite pieces of music, most of them with piano accompaniment. Among them are "Pretty Fido," "Turkey Song for Thankgiving," "The Squirrel," "Gentle Robin Redbreast," "The Railway Train," etc. In addition there are prefatory sketches and articles on music by Prof. Tourjee, who edits the books,—and over fifty full-page engravings. It is beautifully bound in cloth, with black and gold ornamentation.

LINKS IN REBECCA'S LIFE. By "Pansy." Price, $1.50. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co.

"Pansy" has no rival as an author of the best class of Sunday-school books. Her "Ester Ried" and "Chautauqua Girls" series are models in that important line of literature. Her new book, "Links in Rebecca's Life," is worthy of a place in the same list. This book is an admirable one. Its tone is healthy and stimulating, without a trace of sentimentalism or cant: and its characters are thoroughly natural, such as any reader can recognize in the community in which he happens to live. The heroine, Rebecca, is intensely human, with a noble nature in which many weaknesses hide themselves and come often to the surface. But she is a Christian of the best type, and her aspirations and hard-fought battles inspire enthusiasm in a reader. The Committee on International Lessons couldn't do a better thing than to circulate this book in every part of the land. It shows how the lessons may be made helpful in the daily life, and how the Old Testament may be taught with interest to an Infant School, or to men and women of every congregation.

ECHOING AND RE-ECHOING. By *Faye Huntington.* Price $1.50. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co., publishers.

It shows great ignorance of the Sunday-school literature of our day, when one calls it weak and namby-stuff, with an equal mixture of love-stories, and impossible adventures. The censure is just for a certain class of books, but a large library may be gathered of first-class works admirable alike in moral tone and in literary execution, books which everybody can read with delight and profit. "Echoing and Re-echoing" is a book of this sort, a well-told story, abounding with practical lessons, and inciting to a noble Christian life. The most intelligent opponent of religious novels will find his prejudices giving way in reading it, and a fastidious literary reader will be thankful that children have such good books for moulding their literary tastes.

BABY BUNTING. Short Stories with Bright Pictures. By the Best American Authors. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price, $1.00.

Baby Bunting is a beautiful quarto with one of the most attractive outsides we have seen for a long time. It is made up of choice stories adapted to the reading of children from four to eight years of age. They are all short, few of them being over a page in length, and each is accompanied by a full page engraving. It is just the kind of book that ought to be popular, and undoubtedly will be.

YOUNG FOLKS' HISTORY OF GERMANY. By Charlotte M. Yonge. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price, $1.50.

This handsome volume is the first of a series, which will include the principal countries of Europe, the succeeding numbers of which will appear at brief intervals. Miss Yonge, whose talents have been exerted in various directions for the benefit of young readers, has been peculiarly successful in this series, which has had a very large sale in Europe, and deserves a like popularity here. It covers not only the entire period of German civilization down to the present time, but it gives an account of ancient Germany and its inhabitants in times which might almost be called pre-historic. The first chapters are explanatory of the German mythology, and of the ancient methods of worship. The Nibelungen Lied is described and its story told. The real history begins about the year 496 A. D., at a time when the Franks were the victorious race in Europe. From that time down to the beginning of the present year the record is continuous. The volume is profusely illustrated.

HAPPY MOODS OF HAPPY CHILDREN. Original Poems. By favorite American authors. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price $1.00.

We venture to say that no publishing house in the country will issue this season anything choicer in the way of a presentation book of poems than this charming volume. The poems it contains were written expressly for Mr. Lothrop, and have never before been brought together in collected form. Among the authors represented are Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Clara Doty Bates, Margaret G. Preston, Ella Farman, Mrs. Piatt, Harriet McEwen Kimball, Mary A. Lathbury, Nora Perry, Mrs. L. C. Whiton, Celia Thaxter, Edgar Fawcett, and many others. Although the volume is ostensibly preferred for children, it is one which grown-up people will equally enjoy. There are a score or more of illustrations, most of them full-page, exquisitely drawn and engraved.

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